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This bulletin consists of excerpts of formal talks presented at a conference on improving the basic English skills of culturally different youth in large cities. Its purpose is to help teachers, supervisors, administrator, and other educators in recognizing and improving the unique problems which arise in teaching these disadvantaged children.

A general look at the problem of culturally different youth reveals the basic truth that this group of children constitutes a significant segment of the public school population, and that they come to school with special needs, abilities, attitudes, and linguistic disabilities. All these aspects must be approached sympathetically by devoted teachers who are trained in understanding the basic motivations of this youth group. Such teachers have made significant progress in teaching these students.

Reports of specific programs in Detroit, Houston, Philadelphia, Chicago, and New York are described and may serve as patterns for other large cities. Also discussed are special perservice and inservice teacher-training programs, procedures and materials for improving English skills, and the utilization of special materials, smaller class size, and additional personnel to provide more successful programs.

The effectiveness of teacher-training, learning methods, and classroom programs for the culturally different youth is based on the recognition that those whose beliefs do not conform to the dominant culture are not without culture, but possess a different subculture.

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# Improving ENGLISH SKILLS of Culturally Different Youth

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
Office of Education

# HIGHLIGHTS

- Culturally different youth constitute a significant segment of our public school population and have special needs.
- Culturally different youth come to our public schools with attitudes, abilities, potentialities, as well as linguistic disabilities which must be understood sympathetically if their needs are to be fulfilled.
- Sympathetic and devoted teachers, understanding the basic motivations of culturally different youth have made significant progress in teaching these students.
- Enrichment of environmental background, utilization of specially prepared materials, smaller class size, and additional teacher personnel have led to successful programs.
- Special preservice and inservice teacher programs have enabled teachers to meet the challenge of educating culturally different youth.
- Specific programs for Detroit, Philadelphia, Chicago, Houston, and New York City are described and may serve as patterns for other large cities.
- Procedures and materials for improving skills in reading, written expression, and oral expression are described and can be readily adapted to individual school situations.
- The goals of culturally different youth are similar to the goals of all American youth if adequate motivation takes place.

## Significant Quotations

"… . our efficiency as a nation, and the preservation of our position *vis-a-vis* the Communist powers depend largely upon our learning how to motivate and teach the lower socioeconomic groups in our schools."

*Allison Davis*
Professor of Education
University of Chicago

"The children of limited background—a ratio of 1 in 8 pupils in the schools of the great cities of America which will change to 1 in 2 by 1970—will doom the cities if something isn't done about them."

*Aleda E. Druding*
Superintendent, District V
Philadelphia Public Schools

"We have to understand the fact that culturally different does not mean devoid of culture, and that children of Negro families, of Mexican families, of uneducated families, of bookless families and houseless families do not come to us with nothing."

*Charles Calitri*
Hofstra College
New York

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# Improving ENGLISH SKILLS of Culturally Different Youth In Large Cities

Excerpts of speeches given at a conference, May 31–June 2, 1962
U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare
Office of Education

Edited and prepared by

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
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This report does not necessarily express the views of every participant at the conference and is not intended to be a statement of policy of the U.S. Office of Education. It is published by the Office of Education in the hope that it will stimulate widespread and responsible discussion of the issues that occupied the attention of the conference.

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# FOREWORD

THE PURPOSE of this bulletin is to help teachers, supervisors, administrators, and other educators improve the English skills of culturally different youth. Interest in this subject exists wherever a large segment of the school population can be so characterized. Various attempts have been made in recent years to discover administrative organizations, teaching procedures, and instructional materials to aid in solving this problem.

In an effort to gather available research and successful classroom practices, the Secondary Schools Section of the U.S. Office of Education invited a group of leaders to participate in a 3-day conference, May 31–June 2, 1962, on Improving English Skills of Culturally Different Youth in Large Cities. This bulletin consists of excerpts of the formal talks presented at the conference. Although the available research is discussed and general philosophical principles are included, the major emphasis is on successful experiences in the classroom on an individual schoolwide and citywide basis.

It is hoped that the dissemination of the principles and practices described herein will encourage and assist all those who are currently engaged in meeting one of our most significant educational problems.

J. DAN HULL, *Director*
Instructional Programs
Branch

ERIC R. BABER
*Assistant Commissioner*
Division of Elementary and
Secondary Education

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# A Look at the Problem

# The Nature and Values of Culturally Different Youth

**Charles J. Calitri**
**Hofstra College**
**Hempstead, Long Island, N.Y.**

**It is imbedded in the very heart of our American democracy that we must work at the task of improving the lives of our people who find themselves on a lower economic, social, and educational level than the great middle-class majority. There will always be classes; there will always be groups of people composing strata, even though the conditions and the characteristics of those strata may constantly change. As one group finds its way out of the prizefighting ring into professional baseball and then places some of its sons and daughters among the teachers, lawyers, doctors, engineers, and business leaders, another group forms at the lower economic level, either imported from a hungry or despotic land, or home-grown among the displaced persons of industrial towns that lose their factories and farm lands that turn into empires whose fields and orchards are harvested by itinerant laborers and pickers.**

**If we set aside the derelicts for whom there can be only succor and welfare, then the lowest level remains the lowest; but it is constantly rising even as our entire society rises, so that the migrant workers of 1962 are no longer Steinbeck's "Joads" of the thirties. In the large cities the tenements and walkups are being leveled and replaced by large housing projects where there is grass and where ceilings do not crack and fall. Yet the bottom is still there, consisting of those people who have not had time, opportunity, or perhaps the desire to become like those of us who set the goals, form the tastes, select the art forms, and establish the values which are written into our laws and customs.**

**It is true that the prescription for how an American citizen shall behave, by what standards he shall live, and by what morality he shall abide are determined largely by those who have come out of schools and colleges and been brought up in middle- and upper-class families. Behind those institutions are centuries of man's learning and living,**

where knowledge and tradition have been brought together to make up the ways of our adjusting to one another and the world.

It is because of that history, evolved from a Judaeo-Greco-Roman-Christian-Democratic complex, that we are not content to let things happen as they will. We are compelled to influence our people to adopt our basic cultural and political values, especially those embodied in our Constitution and national documents. This is as it should be. It remains only that we learn how to bring about these changes without harming others and ourselves.

One of the dangerous by-products of the attempt to raise the "cultural" and educational levels of those who are different is that, in the attempt to make them over, our teachers strip them of dignity, of individuality, and of self.

Not too many months ago a group of Puerto Rican boys were sitting at a table in a corner of a New York City high school cafeteria discussing Cuba's Castro. At other tables, nearby but somehow distantly separated, other boys of other origins looked across, some annoyed, some sneering, some hostile.

"What's the monkey talk for? Why don't they use English?"

And why not? Since they had first come to school, those Puerto Ricans had been admonished daily by their teachers to talk English, otherwise they "would never learn the language."

Somewhere else in another school a group of Negro youths were speaking in a strange kind of *bop*, that mysterious new language built upon some of the roots and forms used by Negroes more than a hundred years ago, but updated now with musical terms and common words carrying hidden meanings.

In each instance, their language was a deliberate attempt to exclude outsiders from invading their privacy. Wherever there is a congregation of people, isolated for one reason or another from the main culture, language seems to become a weapon and a wall, a bulwark for the preservation of dignity and self. It does not begin that way. Language starts with the need of men to go beyond the communion of existence, where eyes and nose and skin are sufficient to carry identifying messages to the brain so that a man knows where he is and what he feels. Language begins out of a necessity to express what is inside the self and to communicate it to someone outside the self. When there are many men living in the same time and place, who by their living together are forced to share burdens, to witness experiences in concert, to react to outer dangers as a group, language becomes the means of survival. Further developed, it becomes an art form of a people by which they reveal to one another whatever secret and irrepressible emotions and ideas have emerged out of the activity of the glands and brain.

It is here that language becomes the personal property of the individual and of groups of men and women, setting them apart as persons and as people. Because language does belong to a man, we dare not take it away. We may not demand that it be supplanted with another language, nor be suppressed, nor ridiculed. Those are destructive ways.

We may only respect the language as a part of the human being, and perhaps ask that another language be added; but such an addition can occur only if the reasons for it are understood and accepted.

The language of a minority group has the same relationship to the establishment of a sense of self as the identifying club jacket has for the teenage club or gang. When Spanish-speaking youths from Puerto Rico or Mexico defy the strictures of their teachers and the scornful glances of their non-Spanish schoolmates saying, "Why should I learn English? My language is Spanish"; and when the Puerto Rican goes further saying, "Besides I am an American citizen as much as you are," what are they saying to us? What feelings have been ruffled, what deep emotions irritated, what beliefs challenged, and what inner sense of dignity insulted?

Too often these situations have occurred. We, the teaching group, and we, the native-to-these-streets group, have somehow held ourselves higher than the newcomers. We have made them understand not that we welcome them as they are, whatever they are, but that we wish to make them over in order that they may become like us.

The Puerto Rican islands in Manhattan, the Mexican sections of California and the Southwest, the Negro Harlems of all our big cities in the North and Midwest, the three main rivers of migration running up and down the two shores and the center line of our Nation following ripening crops—these are not very different from the Delancey Street Ghettos and the Little Italys of the early 1900's. All exist because people who understand each other's ways hold themselves together against other people who would either cast them out, wall them in, absorb them, or eat them up with words like *assimilation* and *Americanization*. People do not want to be Americanized in the same way that they can be atomized, and they do not want to feel that they must develop cultural tastes and abilities to replace what they already have.

How rigid we are, we of the educated American middle class! We make Carol Kennicotts of all those who come to our main streets, or else we impose the costume and the makeup of our little stages upon all the young actors who come to play with us, pushing them into a faceless chorus line.

We tell them they must speak as we do, read as we do, follow our customs, and adopt our moral values. We attempt to impose our music and art upon them and insist that they admire our technology as if the very differences that make them what they are, individuals in their own right, make them less than we instead of only different.

The problem, then, is one not only of language and reading, but also of socialization—and beyond that, it is a problem of values and philosophy.

How far shall we go with the announced educational ideal of creating a citizenry of well-rounded men and women? How round shall we make them, turning them into marbles that can be rolled on the earth? How far shall we push to achieve the images of excellence we have before our eyes? What kind of happiness shall we insist upon their pursuing? And how profitable must their leisure time activity be? (Or do we forget that, if it is profitable and active, it is no longer leisure but work.)

On the other hand, to what extent shall we encourage difference and provide the atmosphere in which the eccentricities and the individualities of each human being may be developed for whatever purposes that impel him from the inside out? How strongly shall we adhere to the concept that a man's life belongs to him alone and he alone can determine how it shall be lived, setting up only the proviso that he not interfere with or harm any other person in the living?

I do not believe that these questions are incompatible with one another. I do not believe that we must decide for the "good citizen" over the "rugged individual," but much of our practice has been just that kind of choosing.

Perhaps it is one of the elements in the nature of man that he must feel the superiority of his way over all others, or else consider himself inferior. Perhaps it is programed into the ambivalent ego of man, which sees itself both superior and inferior at the same time, that he must hold tightly to what he is and try to change those over whom he controls, whether it be through the domination of a teacher, the weight of majority numbers, or the length of time lived in the neighborhood. In any case, these thoughts lead us to the question of what to do with those who are not all like us.

If that sense of self is in us, it is also in those who are culturally different; and this is the cause of difficulty because that very knowledge of being numerically inferior, new to a place, less affluent, or lower on a social scale inspires a battery of defenses designed to protect the ego itself. Man finds it very difficult to admit that there are those who stand above him. The poor man says the rich cannot be happy with his wealth. The illiterate says the egghead does not know which end is up when it comes to practical things. The man who has been forced by his physician and his heart attack to give up smoking says all those who smoke are idiots.

So those who are culturally different from the majority among whom they are forced to live must resent and reject efforts which they suspect are directed toward making them change, if accompanying those efforts there are indications of disapproval and denigration. Unfortunately, with intentions that are sincere and humanitarian and altruistic, we who teach or are involved in education in any of a hundred ways manage to demonstrate that we do not accept those who are different for what they are.

How do we do this? Perhaps one of the classical criticisms of Americans abroad will demonstrate it. "You think everyone must learn to speak English, so that when you come to our hotels you will be understood," an Italian said. "Why do you not bother to learn our language if you are going to travel in our country?"

"Americans think the whole world belongs to them," a French storekeeper said. "No, I cannot accept American dollars. You will have to change them into new francs."

To bring it closer to home, into the very heart of a family, let us consider the teenage child who rejects classical music as being square. It is not because he was born with a dislike for the tones and rhythms of the concerto or the symphony, but because he had been made to feel that his jazz, swing, rock 'n' roll, bop, or twist are looked down upon by his parents when they ask him "Why don't you play something decent!" We do not really intend to say that his music is indecent. We mean only to say that we have outgrown it, that its sound is different from the sounds we have come to enjoy, that it is too loud, and that it is somehow associated in our minds with behavior systems which we cannot approve. We mean also to tell him that we find richer meanings, finer skills, and more intellectual stimulation in the more classical forms. Because we love him, we want our child to enjoy this too; but we have tried to take something away from him in the process, because a teenager's music belongs to him, is part of whatever he is, and he considers an attack upon it to be an attack upon himself.

Cultural differences mean differences in value systems, and it should be evident that I do not separate the culturally different only in terms of national, migrational, or social scale groups. Teenage children are culturally different from the adults who are their parents and teachers. The problems which attend the concept of differences are universal. Difference leads to conflict; conflict leads to offense and defense where the larger force is almost compelled by the nature of things to absorb the smaller force, and the lesser force is compelled to resist. It cannot permit itself to be assimilated out of existence.

Thus what we mean by education, the leading away from whatever is, becomes a battle joined until we are capable of seeing the process of learning and teaching as an interaction rather than the submission of one group to another.

The child has a reality which is the life he is living. He has himself and the world outside of himself which he takes in through his senses and refashions in his brain according to whatever has happened during past experiences. If we would be effective in our school communication with him, then we must admit the reality of that self in our classrooms.

But where is there a reflection of this child and of the world in which he exists? What textbook confronts him with reality? Where can he see himself? And where are those pleasant sensations which have pleased him in his own world, with which he can be motivated to enjoy this other world of school?

Our fears of exposing young people to the kinds of truths their parents might find objectionable, or for which pressure groups might attack us, force us to feed a bland diet of tasteless foods, where bitter and strong flavors have already titillated young adult taste buds. We are in competition with television and motion pictures; with newspapers, magazines, and paperbacks; with crowds of friends on street corners, at beach parties, and in cellar basements. We have our pupils from homes where unhappiness is a reality, where there are unpleasant emotions which make it impossible for them to recognize a stewed prune kind of world where no child hates his father or peers. In most of our classes, then, we dare not cater to the interests of our students, even though we know that those interests will sharpen their perceptions, irritate their nerve endings, and activate their brains.

How much worse it is when the child comes to us from another language, or another segment of our society, or a traveling home with another set of values and with a much stranger concept of the world! How much more difficult when his language patterns, even in English, are built upon conceptual differences, so that a cup sits on the table because in his experience there is no need for a saucer! How much more difficult if his schooling must follow the trailer camps and the crops, or if his color pushes him into a corner apart from the clean white faces which belong to the clean white world of textbook illustrations!

So, having tried to impose our language upon young people, rejecting their mother tongue, or their peer group's meta-language, and being prevented in most places from at least dealing with truths that they will understand, we are forced out of our desire to give them something, to place before them pictures of ideals that cannot be matched. We defeat them with our assault of honesty, goodness, integrity, bravery, and courage as the qualifications of humanity, setting up for them images of excellence which are impossible of imitation.

This we have managed to do for all youths, not only those who are considered culturally different.

We hold forth such values in almost uncompromising fashion, pretending that these lie behind the precepts which any fine American must follow. In doing so, we are telling them that, whatever dishonest act they may commit, whatever anger or spite they may feel against sibling or parent or neighbor, whatever fear they exhibit or act of cowardice they may perform simply because they are not superhuman, they face condemnation. We are telling them further that they are not worthy to be in the world as we see it.

This is no exaggeration. Where in the textbooks will a youth have revealed to him the weaknesses of a Washington or the inadequacies of a Lincoln? Where will he find it said that men are not always strong, that there are times which encourage cowardice because the desire to live is stronger than the desire to be heroic at a particular moment in a particular battle? Until what semester must he wait before some teacher will make an acknowledgment that our heroes were also people like Lord Jim or Fleming, and that during World War II our soldiers were capable of inhuman acts? I do not know whether we are to be forgiven or not for wanting to hide these aspects of our character which are not praiseworthy.

I have no intention of demeaning either our country's heroes or the values of our society and culture. There are characteristics of human behavior which we do admire, as a Nation and a people, and there is value to our trying to emulate them. But admonition and preachment are not effective teaching methods, and the half truths of history and the fiction of shoddy fiction are both forms of exhortation. I do intend to point out that, if we are to have any success in our educational exchange with youth, then our share must be the honesty of things as they are.

Therefore, we must know how things are. Most of us who have become teachers have spent from 2 to 5 years learning about children. Where we have been fortunate, we have been taught by professors who themselves had some knowledge gained from classrooms and from facing the problems of the active teacher. In that way, if we remember what we have been taught and what we were when we were youths, then we come with some measures of competence for the teaching of youth. But how many of us have studied enough anthropology to be able to recognize the differences and accept the behavior patterns of people from another world? How many of us have been prepared by field experiences in sociology to realize what constitute the elements of a migratory population? Are we prepared to accept, without blanching, a set of values different from our own and then do no more than point out the differences, laying down no moral platitudes?

It is the failure to recognize the possibilities and the implications of cultural differences that makes for a failure with young people. We need to know, before they come to our classes, what Puerto Rican children are like and what we may expect from them. We need to know them as a cultural entity and as individuals within that culture, so that their inordinate sense of dignity not be affronted and their nationalistic yearnings not be stepped on; for their sense of already having been rejected by the new people of their new environment has made them wary of us.

We need to know that there are Negro youths who have been so buffeted by their white neighbors that they have grown a hatred for the white world, and we must learn to listen to them, trying desperately to discover what they are saying when they behave in a way that seems peculiar to us. What is the source of their defiance or their sullenness? How much do they resent the lip service some of us give to civil rights?

We need to know how to admit that there is color, not try to wipe it away as if it did not exist with a pretense that all men are the same. All men are not the same and children know it better than adults. More than that, we have to understand our own unconscious prejudices, those glances and withdrawals which communicate what we feel regarding people of different origins, even as our minds are telling us we feel nothing and our mouths are telling others that we love them.

We have to understand the fact that culturally different does not mean devoid of culture, and that children of Negro, Mexican, uneducated, bookless, and houseless families do not come to us with nothing. Let me repeat—they come with selves and with a sense of belonging to whatever group is theirs. They, too, have parents and they, too, have brothers and sisters; and in some cases they, too, have individual beds which they do not have to share with four other persons. They, too, have television and have seen motion pictures, and in these respects they are the same as any other youths.

Finally, we have to understand that many of them come to us, too often, with shattered dignity and frightened selves and that their hostility is too deep to be seen by our eyes. They have learned long ago that one can hide things from strangers who have not yet discovered how to look at other people and know what they are seeing.

These are the ones we must cultivate, must help to grow a trust in us which they justly do not have. Because until we have recognized that the values by which they have lived are often directly in contrast with the values of our society, and until we can accept their behavior, however strange and antisocial it may be from our point of view, we can never hope to help them. Perhaps we must even question ourselves and our motives once again, looking carefully at some of the concepts we have held closely in our hearts and minds.

There are other questions which we must ask ourselves. If we are convinced that one must know how to read in our society and to speak so that he can simply get along with those who do not know his language, we must remember that the language of the United States is English, not Spanish, or the Negro meta-language, or the dialects of the migratory workers. The question, then, is how much must we accomplish; where do we set the limits of our goals? Shall we try to make every child, regardless of his origin or his subgroup, an appreciator of fine literature, feeding him *Silas Marner*, or even Salinger because the books are there and he "must read for pleasure"? Must every American learn to derive his pleasure from this type of reading? Must every American learn syntax? Must they all speak with round tones and in perfect sentences? Or is there room in our world for those who will manage to communicate in less than formal ways?

The final question is for all teachers and educational administrators, for all members of the adult society who are concerned about younger people. Just what do we want to do with or to or for our children? What do we expect of them? What kind of world can we anticipate and what do we imagine will be their role in it? It is at this point, if we are wrong, that we can erect impassable walls for ourselves. When we are dealing not only with young people who are already different from us because of their age, but also with those who have differences which are a result of color, national origin, occupation, educational level, or economic status, our answers need to be clear, realistic, and as right as our intelligence can make them.

When we have found our answers and our new perspectives, or even reinforced those ideas which we already have through a new examination of this problem, then we can go about helping those youth who need our inspiration and our confidence. Then we can create images for them, not solely out of the legendary excellences of our history, but out of ourselves—sympathetic, honest, capable, and understanding selves—with whom these young people can first of all communicate and finally, we hope, wish to emulate.

# Society, the School, and the Culturally Deprived Student

**Allison Davis**
*Professor of Education*
University of Chicago
Chicago, Ill.

**Nearly 15 years ago, in an address to the general session of the American Association of School Administrators, I pointed out that our efficiency as a Nation and the preservation of our position vis-a-vis the communist powers depended largely upon our learning how to motivate and teach the socioeconomic groups in our schools. For our national survival, the most important fact about our low economic groups is that they include more pupils with high IQ's than do the middle economic groups.[1] The reason is that the great majority of our pupils come from the lower socioeconomic groups. In New York, Chicago, or Detroit about 70 percent of all public school students come from the working-class families. On the other hand, only 30 percent of our school populations in the large industrial cities come from the white-collar, business, and professional families. Day by day this proportion is being reduced by the migration of the middle and higher socioeconomic groups to the suburbs.**

**In America we have one and only one way to get the complex work of our industry, business, science, and government accomplished at an increasingly efficient level with the advent of each generation. That method is literally the recruitment of able and ambitious people from the working-class level into the middle level, which is the level of the engineer, the scientist, the teacher, and managerial groups in industry and in education. As a Nation, we must have the brains and the physical efforts of these people who move up from the working-class families into the higher socioeconomic groups. Any school program which does not encourage this majority group, which does not discover the ability in these millions of pupils, and which does not help develop**

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[1] Kenneth Eells et al. *Intelligence and Cultural Differences.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951. p. 120–161.

and guide these able students into productive skills and jobs in our economy is handicapping us in a race against time.

Sputnik I shook our complacency about our competition with the communist world. However, we apparently have not yet realized that a nation which does not develop an effective program for educating the children of two thirds or more of its population is inviting disaster. We are greatly outnumbered. The only way we can keep ahead or abreast in this race is by finding and using a higher proportion of our able people in the lower socioeconomic groups.

One of the most serious errors we could make as a Nation and as educators would be to believe that the less than half of our population which is in the middle and higher economic groups can furnish enough scientists, engineers, teachers, production men, and skilled workers to enable us to maintain our world position. We shall need the able children from all low-income groups, including the southern white or Negro groups, the northern groups, and the foreign born. In fact, we must have them; our survival depends upon our ability to train them. Anyone who has the idea that the school can drag its feet with these groups had better reexamine his view of the future, the immediate future. The question is now a matter of how many such people we can develop within the next 10 years.

## The Importance of Migration in American History

One fundamental social process has created the United States: that life-giving process has been migration. The migrations from Europe and the forced migration from Africa supplied our basic population. The internal migration from the eastern States to the West developed and unified our country.

Starting with the First World War, when migration from Europe was sharply reduced, the internal migration from the farm to the city, and from the South to the North and West became the major factor in the industrial expansion of our country. The basic cause of this migration was the need of northern industry for unskilled and semiskilled labor which had formerly been obtained from Europe.

All these migrations were regarded as unwelcome and socially destructive by the groups which had arrived at an earlier date and which had become partially acculturated. After they had spent just one generation in America, those who had come here to escape persecution or failure in Europe feared and resented the next wave of immigrants. Those of English origin looked down on the Irish and

Germans, rejected the Swedes, and so on.[2] With the bone-wrenching, heart-twisting impact of the strange, crooked, complex city upon the migrant and his family, it is no surprise that many of them suffered an emotional and psychological trauma. (Between 1920 and 1960 the northern Negro had the highest rate in the United States for commitment for mental illness.)

Today, in our cities, the problems of educating the masses of the students are intensified by migration from the South and from Mexico and Puerto Rico. The flight from the South to the North and West has been the largest internal migration in the modern occidental world. Its history has not yet been written. We do not understand its sweep and power, or its almost infinite complexity. The writers in the future who attempt to understand this endless series of migrations from the South will gain an epic view, I am certain, of an almost superhuman effort of peoples who uprooted themselves and in millions of cases sacrificed themselves so that their children might have a better chance.

## Comparison of Middle- and Lower-Class Behavior and Values

The future of our Nation industrially and socially depends upon the ability of the schools to help large numbers of children from working class families learn the basic skills essential both to social and economic life. The schools have not yet learned how to give this training effectively.[3] The major cause of this conflict is the conflict between the middle-class values and goals of the school and the cultural patterns of the families and students in the lower socioeconomic group. Before attempting to develop new approaches to this problem within the school, we need a clear and specific knowledge of the behavior and values which the students in the lower economic groups learn from their families and peers. Unless we know how the culture of the family and gang motivate the student, we shall not be able to change his motivation so that he will learn either the old curriculum which we now follow or the new curriculum which we hope to develop.

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[2] W. L. Warner and Leo Strole. *The Social Systems of American Ethnic Groups.* New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1945. p. 1–29, 67–102; Francis J. Brown and Joseph S. Roucek. *One America.* New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1945. p. 33–119; and Ernest Burgess, ed. *The Urban Community.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1926. p. 48–54.

[3] Allison Davis. *Social-Class Influences Upon Learning.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1948. (The Inglis Lecture); W. L. Warner, Robert Havighurst, and Martin Loeb. *Who Shall Be Educated?* New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962; and Patricia Sexton. *Education and Income.* New York: The Viking Press, 1961.

## At Home

The usual parents in each social level are preparing their child for the kind of life (the type of work, of sexual controls, and of education) which is approved and desired by members of his own social level. From his birth, the middle-class child is trained in a cultural world which demands early social and intellectual attainment. Therefore, to speed through the lengthy ways of the middle-class training, parents use methods which build a desire for achievement in the child himself.

In working-class families, however, the child learns to seek other pleasures and to want other types of prestige. Growing up in the street culture of blighted areas, living in tenements and kitchenettes, the child of our white and colored slums learns a characteristic pattern of ambitions, pleasures, and habits. Not only is his organic life expressed more directly, but his basic psychological responses are also less frustrated. He is allowed to fight when he is angry. Frequently he fights with his brothers and sisters. Physical aggression is regarded as normal. Because fighting is common in his family and in his neighborhood, he learns to take a blow and to give one. His parents believe that beatings are the normal way of controlling a child (or a wife). Thus he gets his thrashings regularly and learns *not to fear them.*

The lower working-class child also has his share of fear and worry. His family is more often struck by disease and by separation. Their chronic poverty breeds fear of eviction, of homelessness, and of hunger, the most constant of all his fears. On the other hand, his family and his gang teach him not to be afraid of a fight, not to be intimidated by the teacher and the police, and not to fear injury or even death.

The lower working-class child also grows up faster, in the sense of achieving personal maturity. He is not protected from the crises of life. He sits with the ill and the dying. Even as a 6-year-old, he listens to family discussions of unemployment and marital difficulties. He "lives fast" in a society where he will become a man or woman at 13 or 14.

The culture of the working class also differs from that of middle-class groups in its concepts of manliness and womanliness. The boy will learn to be more male—coarser, more aggressive physically, more openly sexual—then the average middle-class boy. The girl will be bolder, more outspoken sexually, than the girl trained in a middle-class family. Thus, by the time he is 13 or 14, the adolescent in low-status communities has learned a deep cultural motivation which is different from that of most teachers, and regarded by them as unacceptable.

## At School

The verbal and academic loading in intelligence tests is a powerful determinant of the retardation and discouragement of the children and adolescents from the lower economic groups. Word games, such as those in the test, phrased in standard English, are not familiar to low-status children. In fact, by the time they are 2 years old, the children from the lower socioeconomic groups already are inferior in verbal skills to those from the middle class. It is inevitable, therefore, that even at this first-grade level low-status children should not perform as well on tests and on the verbal aspects of the curriculum.

Moreover, after the primary grades, the superiority of the middle-class child in verbal skills and academic habits *increases faster* than that of low-status children. The reasons are clear: the pressure exerted by his parents, and the pace they and the teacher set for him, as well as his opportunities to learn language, also increase faster than similar pressures and opportunities of the low-status child. Thus, by the time these two cultural groups have reached the secondary school, the low-status students are farther behind the middle economic group of students than they have ever been. This retardation, as we euphemistically call it, exists in all areas of language and the curriculum.

The school cannot be expected to effect rapid changes in academic behavior which has been developing since the individual was a young child, nor can the school quickly modify the students' social values and behavior which have been learned in the family and other institutions in our urban low-status communities. It is especially difficult to initiate such changes with the adolescent, for his academic habits of speech and study, as well as the social habits of recreation, gang behavior, and sexual exploration are already established.

Nevertheless, the school actually does stimulate changes in certain basic types of cultural behavior, such as clothing, food habits, house furnishing, manners, and even in occupational aspirations. Many a girl from a poor, working family is now a nurse, a typist, a receptionist in a medical office, or a clerk in business or government because the high school raised her level of aspiration, and because the home economics teacher or the teacher of business encouraged her to hope and to try. In most such cases, the teacher has said nothing; but the teacher's example, as well as her encouragement and acceptance of the student, has had its effect, sometimes years after the girl's graduation from high school.

Usually the school is the one place where the student from the slums has the chance to associate with and to want to become like a middle-class person. We have found that the powerful influence of the school and its goals often shows its effects upon the student 10 or 15 years after graduation. Often when the teacher thinks that the student has long since failed and been lost in the world of the slum, he learns that the student has become a nurse, the owner of a small business, or even a teacher! Simply because an adolescent receives a failing grade in an English, mathematics, or biology course, one must not believe that he is destined to be a failure in the real world. The correlation between high school grades and later income is low (and possibly zero for the working class) just as the correlation between IQ and teachers' grades is only +.3. *Both the intelligence test and high school courses are poor predictors of later success in the world*, especially for boys. In either of the cases mentioned above, the correlation would have to be +.85 and preferably +.9 to enable one to predict with any degree of accuracy in the cases of individual students.

## The Teacher's Predicament

More than 95 out of every 100 teachers are from the middle socioeconomic groups.[4] The teachers, therefore, come from a cultural way of life markedly different from that of the majority (60 to 70 percent) of the pupils.

A young and hopeful teacher, trained in our best colleges and universities, often undergoes an emotional trauma when he begins teaching in a situation where the majority of students are from families of the lower socioeconomic groups. Many new (and old) teachers find it impossible to understand the attitudes and values of these pupils; they are puzzled by the students' reactions to the material and to the instructor, and by their often sullen, resentful behavior. Such teachers, coming from middle-class backgrounds and possessing highly academic training from colleges and universities, experience a cultural shock owing to the great difference between their own training and academic goals and those of most of their students. The result in many cases is bewilderment, followed by disillusionment and apathy.

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[4] Warner, Havighurst, and Loeb, op. cit., p. 15–45.

## Principles of Teaching and Learning

It seems clear that the first thing we have to do if we are to help these "retarded" students to change their attitudes toward themselves and toward the school work is to change our attitudes toward them. If they are to develop hope for their future and faith in their ability to achieve a useful life, they must feel that we have faith in them. No one does well in life unless he feels that someone has faith in him.

In stimulating new learning in the academically retarded student, then, we need first a new relationship between the teacher and the student. The teacher will have to initiate this new relationship by trying to understand the student and his strange stigmatized culture. The teacher also must remember that the processes by which human beings change their behavior (learn) are extremely complex and usually slow.

The major principles involved in the student's learning what the teacher has to teach may be stated as follows:

1. All learning is stimulated or hindered by the teacher's feeling toward the student. Teacher and student must trust and have faith in each other.

2. All school learning is influenced by the cultural evaluations which the teacher makes of the student, and which the student makes of the teacher. Often in rejecting the student's cultural background, the teacher appears to reject the student himself as a human being. In return, and as early as the first grade, the student may reject the culture of the school and of the teacher.

3. All school learning is influenced by the student's cultural motivation, by the degree of interest and drive with respect to school work which the student has learned in his family and peer group.

4. All school learning is influenced by the presence, or absence, of intrinsic motivation in the curriculum itself. Neither the teacher nor the student can create interest in wordy rigmarole or in dull unrealistic writing assignments.

## Positive Steps for Improvement

Teachers know that it is impossible to interest the majority of pupils of the lower socioeconomic levels in the present traditional primers, basic readers, and grammar and English composition textbooks. Teachers realize that most of their time has to be given to discipline because the curriculum has no reality or interest for these pupils. It is this overall structure, consisting of a narrow academic curriculum, of equally narrow and outmoded kinds of tests, and boring unrealistic textbooks, which kills the ability and interest of most of these students.

Scientific studies at several universities have shown that students learn best only when the materials and readings genuinely interest them. The scientists have proved what every teacher already knows—no interest in the materials results in little or no learning! In this respect, children are just like adults. No one does a job well unless it lights a fire in him.[5]

Many scientific studies have shown, moreover, that speed in reading and in arithmetical processes has no relationship to the understanding of difficult content or to arithmetical reasoning.[6] Yet the primary aim of the present curriculum seems to be speed for its own sake, so that the student will perform well on the speeded achievement tests. This requires constant drill on meaningless tasks. A basic reason for this drilling for speed is to raise scores on so-called achievement tests.

Now that we have noted the sources of our difficulties, perhaps we may take steps to remedy these difficulties. If we succeed in taking one of these steps, we shall be leading the way, for little or nothing is being done. These are the steps I suggest:

1. *Study of the school's community.* The typical teacher knows little or nothing about the actual values, motives, and feelings of the lower socioeconomic community. Faculty members will be helped in understanding the behavior of their pupils if they learn these facts by individual case studies and home visits, or by informal talks with the pupils in their classes. The faculty as a whole may cooperate in a study, using census data on the community and questionnaires and interviews with parents and students.

2. *Inservice training of teachers.* All success in improving schools depends upon the willingness of teachers to learn from each other. To improve any aspect of teaching or learning in the school, the administration must provide for serious inservice training of teachers. Groups of teachers should not simply study books dealing with cultural groups and adolescent interests, but should analyze their own classroom experiences and the problems which they have met in their daily work. For any of the problems I have mentioned, there is no effective start toward a solu-

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[5] Helen M. Robinson. "Summary of Investigations of Reading." *Journal of Educational Research,* 1960–1961. p. 211–212.

[6] William S. Gray. "Summary of Investigations," *Journal of Educational Research,* published annually from 1953 through 1959, passim.

tion without the participation of the majority of the most influential teachers in prolonged training programs.

3. *New reading materials.* Here is an exciting opportunity for the sensitive, alert, and constructive teacher to learn the real interests and experiences of children and adolescents, and to select stories and reading materials which will meet these interests in the English class. New reading materials of a realistic, exciting kind usually will not necessarily come from college and university professors. They will come chiefly from classroom teachers who are in daily contact with children and adolescents. Any alert teacher can find such stories or materials and test their value with her classes.

4. *A more realistic curriculum.* What I have said about reading applies to the content of the rest of the curriculum. New materials in social studies, foreign languages, home economics, and even mathematics which deal with life realistically, as the pupils know it, are greatly needed, but up to now I have seen few texts which have realism and interest for students. Only school staffs who know children and adolescents, their interests and communities, can select these new curricular materials. Let us have the eyes to observe our students, the interest to use our observations in finding pertinent materials, and the courage to use them in experimental form as a part of classroom work. We have had 30 years of talk about a new realistic curriculum. Where *is* the new curriculum? We want to develop it and write it—not talk about it.

5. *More provision for student discussion.* We need a method of teaching by which the students of all groups and all socioeconomic levels will be drawn into classroom discussions in each subject. At present, the teacher usually fears to allow the low-status students to talk freely; she is afraid of their English, of the subjects they may raise out of real life, or of her own reactions. But the best classes I have seen in the hundreds of schools I have visited have been those in which there was free discussion by all.

6. *Integration of all groups into school activities.* The integration of all groups, both in classroom activities and in extracurricular activities, is the test of human relations and of the democratic ladder in any school. We must see to it that all groups participate in all types of activities, not simply in athletics, but also in drama, the orchestra, and the other status organizations of the school.

## The Importance of Acculturation

Finally, it is important to consider the problems of the culturally deprived in-migrant and slum groups in their total social and economic matrix. This I have tried to do briefly, but I have omitted the factor of cultural change. With fuller employment, the upgrading of workers from these groups, and the social opportunities which increased wages afford, the basic process of cultural change, or acculturation, is being accelerated. It is this complex and widening process of cultural change in the lower economic groups which is exerting the most powerful force upon the child and adolescent.

We must remember that the family, the peer group, and the neighborhood are the ultimate determinants of most of the nonadaptive behavior of these students in the schools. The school helps change these cultural values and behaviors of the family, but like any basic cultural change, the effects of the school become apparent only over a generation or two. Such programs as those in New York and Detroit may be realistic and effective for some individuals, but they cannot, of course, change the basic economic and cultural patterns of the lower income community. We should expect neither minor changes in the curriculum, individual conferences with a few students, nor limited work programs to solve most of the problems of the culturally deprived masses of students. Only changes in the family as a socializing agency and in the structure of education will accomplish this deep and wide remotivation and reorientation of the culturally deprived masses.

In this broader process, which is called acculturation, the school has an important function, however. If one studies the communities of the foreign born, he recognizes the basic changes in their standard of living and way of life, which are caused chiefly by the school. But this change requires time. The school is an important part of the vast network of economic and cultural forces which are changing the motivation and the aspiration of the low status groups. Not only teachers and schools are aiding in this sweeping process, but also the new standards of living, new desires for better housing, better food, more adequate medical care, better jobs, and better communities and schools for all children. This mighty process of acculturation and the increasingly available economic and social roles for these groups are developing the motivation which stimulates the use of intellectual abilities by students and adults.

Acculturation is in the air, in the spirit of the time; it leaps across the artificial barriers of residential and school districting; it moves whether the school is asleep or marking time. The process of acculturation which is raising the standard of living and lifting the aspirations of the masses in America cannot be stopped, although it is being impeded. Its working is inevitable because all the new experiences of the in-migrant, all the new things which he sees and wants for himself, as well as the new concept and role of a human being which he finds in the city, teach him new values and give him new drives. It is only through these terms of acculturation that one can begin to understand the tremendous efforts of the Negro Americans, after nearly 14 generations in America, for full participation in the public, economic, political, and cultural life of the United States.

In this highly complex process of acculturation, which operates over decades and generations, the teachers and the schools have labored hard, though at times blindly. Teachers have made sacrifices, have given their hearts to their work, but often have been discouraged. Looking at the results of their hard, nerve-wracking work in one class period, one semester, or one year, they have sometimes felt that their lives have been wasted.

The sacrifices, however, have not been in vain. Time and work are telling. In just one generation, the measured IQ of Negro children in Philadelphia and Chicago has increased about 10 points.[7] Furthermore, the Negroes drafted in Illinois and New York City had a lower rate of failure on the education test used by Selective Services than did the whites in the southern States. The percentage of Negroes passing the educational test in Illinois was 97.5 percent and in New York City it was 97.6 percent—in both cases higher than the percentage of whites passing the test in Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, Florida, Kentucky, Oklahoma, Tennessee, New Mexico, and Kansas.[8] This examination was designed to eliminate only the definitely retarded. This rise in IQ and decline in educational retardation must be attributed to the capacity of Negroes to learn well when their educational and cultural environment is improved. Similar changes are taking place in work skills and in community organization.

We know that a third of the white children of unskilled and semiskilled families in a midwestern city are retarded in grade placement by the time they are 9 and 10 years old.[9] When white children from these lowest occupational groups are in their 10th year, they are about 2 years behind the children from the top occupational families in reading, and 10 points lower in IQ ratings.[10] At age 10, Negro children of the lowest economic group are about a year behind the white lowest economic group in reading, and 5 points lower in IQ.

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[7] Allison Davis. "The Education of Children from the Lower Socio-Economic Groups," R. D. Hess, ed., *The Urban Lower Class.* New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1963.

[8] Selective Service System. Monograph No. 10, *Special Groups.* Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1953. p. 147.

[9] Kenneth Eells et al. *Intelligence and Cultural Differences.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951. p. 112.

Both groups have improved markedly in the last generation. The average IQ score of white children of unskilled and semiskilled parents in Chicago is 102.3, that is, actually above the national average for all children.[11] The average IQ score of Negro children born in Philadelphia is 97.[12] Klineberg and Lee have shown, moreover, that the IQ's of Negro children born in the South improve steadily with length of residence in New York or Philadelphia.[13] This trend is statistically significant and continuous. Such improvement in educational aptitude indicates the great power of acculturation, both in the school and in the community.

What we as teachers must always remember is that man is a learner. No matter how handicapped he may be, he still possesses the highest of human capacities, the ability to improve himself by learning. No man, woman, or child is ever so far down that, given the opportunity, he cannot learn his way up.

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[10] Robert Daniel Hess. *An Experimental Culture—Fair Test of Mental Ability* (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation). Committee of Human Development, The University of Chicago, 1950. p. 97.

[11] Ibid., p. 91.

[12] Everett S. Lee. "Negro Intelligence and Selective Migration," *American Sociological Review*. Vol. XVI, 1951, p. 231.

[13] Otto Klineberg. *Negro Intelligence and Selective Migration*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1935. p. 59; Everett S. Lee, op. cit., p. 231–232.

# The Goals for Culturally Different Youth

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**To me the term "culturally different" refers to such ethnic groups as Mexicans, Japanese, Chinese, Negroes, children of European immigrants who have not as yet been absorbed by the national culture, and other children from homes where poverty cuts them off from the main values of our society. This is a varied group, with varied problems and varied contributions. Any discussion of goals which they may achieve must likewise consider special needs and the processes of growth and development. Methods and materials are inseparable from the goals which are to be achieved unless we content ourselves with mere mouthings of polite aims.**

**Almost immediately any question concerning the culturally different asks also "different from what?" Implied is a relatively uniform culture from which the standards of these youth differ. And yet it is difficult to define that culture insofar as it concerns the field of our native language. Even those youngsters whose parents own college diplomas may have far less advantage than we would like to believe. Poll after poll discloses that 50 percent of our college graduates are reading only periodicals—and not too stimulating periodicals at that. A day's listening to radio and television reveals something more than dialect differences in the speech of our public, much of it high school educated. Only in dealing with extremes do we find that groups are distinct.**

**Consideration of a program for the culturally different immediately places one at the center of an intellectual whirlwind. Our aims, the topic suggests, are somehow to differ from the general national aims; but surely our aims are, on the contrary, to give these special groups such education as will remove them from the culturally different category. One reason they are different is, of course, home experience; another, as obvious, is life in the midst of a special cultural group. If we continue this influence by giving these youngsters an education different from the education of others, we will be but continuing the**

very ill we hope to remove. Yet there are many youngsters who need to have their individual and group differences recognized and who, without that recognition, will achieve only superficial culture. This clearly implies a curriculum, a manner of teaching, broad enough to include differences, flexible enough to include "different" and "not-different."

We must remember too that, even within an ethnic group, cultural differences are great. In a city such as New Orleans, for example, all Negroes, without respect to education and many other cultural standards, are part of a culturally different group. Included are some who have been exposed to good reading all of their lives, who speak excellent English and write well. They know something of drama from trips to New York and of music from good recordings. They are, of course, restricted in New Orleans to experience with a segregated group which develops many customs peculiar to itself, and which has habits of communication definitely limiting frank speech in the presence of native whites. While there are not many of these relatively privileged young people, they exist and affect the culture of their different group.

One further point must be remembered: there are many ways of arriving at a common goal. All too often we assume one and only one route—whatever is presently being done. This notion is absurd. A person may—as the novelist Galsworthy did—become a wide reader and even an important writer without reading George Eliot. A man may be literate without enjoying Scott. The old saying has it that "there's more than one way to skin a cat."

If one may generalize about goals for the culturally different, certain principles may be suggested: the goals for the culturally different must be the same as for the larger group; the different and the not-different groups must be expected to overlap and to vary in achievement from poor to superior; means as well as ends must be considered; and ultimate evaluation of achievement should be in ability and zest to continue rather than in experience with specific items.

Limitations of this paper do not permit an outline in great detail of the specific learnings in every aspect of English. Rather, the major areas can be cited: listening and speech, reading and writing, learning about language—and some of the chief handicaps which must be met and the general learnings which must be had if goals are to be met. That both the highly gifted and the slow learners must be considered should go without saying. Even the American astronauts, all chosen carefully with identical criteria, differ. The custom of depending on tests which often measure language rather than other traits can conceal from us important differences.

## Speech: Basic Skill

Speech is considered first since this language skill which the youngster brings from home is usually a mark of his different culture, and since speech is fundamental to the other language skills—reading and writing. (No one should mistake a foreign language dialect or substandard southern speech transported to the North as a national or racial inborn trait!) Speech is also, of course, an element in ability to listen, and listening is modified as speech learning changes.

The aim—a reasonable aim—is *the ability to speak clearly in acceptable colloquial language.* While this aim does not differ from that for the school population as a whole, it means additional attention and learning by many of the culturally different. It can be achieved if we are serious about it, and if we do not approach improvement as though we thought the learner guilty of sin or stupidity when he expresses himself in broken English. This is true whether his language is the product of a substandard home environment or of the effort to combine what he knows of two languages as in the case of the bilingual. Far too often this is forgotten. It takes no more brains to learn "we did" and "we are" from a parent than to learn "we done" and "we is." Vocabulary, too, is learned through use, and frequently the vocabulary of the differently cultured child is unknown by school and unmeasured by tests.

Today's linguists are agreed that language develops on a basis of the oral, that spoken forms eventually determine written. In the individual, speech is learned first, translates itself into reading and later into writing. Attacking the writing without changing speech is to work at a superficial kind of learning which can be only indifferently effective in the expression of individual ideas—our eventual aim.

Recently at Dillard University, a Negro college in New Orleans, representative freshmen were tested carefully. Speech recordings were analyzed by an expert in phonetics, and writing was analyzed by two competent students of written English. In the diagnosis of 44 students, only 1 student showed a difference between oral and written expression; that is, the speech instructor was able to predict the language errors the student would make in writing while the writing experts predicted accurately the general speech problems of the writers. This is an impressive finding when one remembers that these students had had 12 years of instruction in reading and writing, but very little if any in speech. Despite rules and examples, speech—home speech—dominated.

There is evidence, much of it found in Negro colleges, that speech problems per se can be remedied if approached seriously and if modern knowledge is applied. Certainly there is evidence that speech (and writing also) cannot be changed through a set of rules or drill on independent words. This paper's limitations preclude any summary of the literature, but surely all English leaders are aware that our university language centers have a sound body of recent findings which point to the value of phrasing, cadence, and sentence patterns as the basis for teaching language. Teachers of foreign language now use tapes, disks, and other mechanical devices. There is no reason why similar materials cannot be introduced into public schools and used with students who come with the language of a different culture. Persons going abroad to teach English under the auspices of our State Department are given this type of special training, but we have yet to use an equally intelligent approach with our own pupils.

Using good speech depends in large part upon the learner's hearing that speech until it sounds natural. The learner, when a baby at home or later a student of a foreign language at school, combines hearing with speaking. All too often the child from the culturally different home hears very little standard speech other than the teacher's. In consequence, he considers what is taught "school language." Generous use of recordings, with many voices, can change the situation. Radio and television sometimes aid, but all too often the speech heard on programs which attract the young merely confuses. Often, too, recordings of poems and plays used in school are unsuited to the student's daily speech needs. For all of these reasons, especially prepared materials will probably be necessary, along with the use of student recordings and playbacks. The aim is not merely to enable the student to make desirable sounds in class and to pass tests, but to feel at home while using and hearing good colloquial language. It should be emphasized that the dialect of educated persons in the region should be used.

Obviously, the earlier in life the learner acquires desirable speech, the better. But unless the school antagonizes the student, change can be made at any age from first grade to college. There seems good reason to believe, based on expert study, that informed use of sentence patterns in speech could supplant much of the drill on grammar as it is now taught. Thus a speech program for the culturally different could supplant formal analysis and, in the long run, save time and frustration for both student and teacher. Such a program, however, has not even a family resemblance to the drills on vowels and single words often prevalent, and it would not be related to an out-of-date grammar course. Obviously teacher training in the new method and content is essential.

Using language that is correctly phrased and pronounced is not, however, a sufficient aim. The "ability to speak clearly," which is the major objective, includes ability to communicate and to speak freely. This comes from consistent experience in reporting and discussing, and implies freedom of expression. The high school graduate should be able to state his case and to support his statement. For the member of a minority, or differently cultured group, this objective must be considered in connection with our later consideration of learning simple but basic semantic principles.

## Reading

While in the area of speech our problems may be relatively clear-cut, they inevitably become more complicated when we discuss reading. This results because reading is a secondary skill, dependent normally upon speech and always intimately related to it. Thus our difficulties are compounded.

One who has followed much of the turbulent debate on reading over the past 10 years might think this was a purely external skill which, with a proper method, could be made effective readily. Actually it has a strong base in attitude and understanding of its uses. The child who comes to school after having lived his first 6 years in a home where books are taken for granted as a normal part of life, where he has been read to and has observed his parents reading and discussing books, is prepared to use his reading and to carry skills beyond the classroom. But to many "other cultured" children, reading is strictly a school operation, something at best utilized by adults in skimming a newspaper or managing (leafing through) a magazine—often one chiefly pictorial. For such children, listening to stories read and told is certainly a right in a culture such as ours.

Some cities—New York is an example—have attempted to supply for the differently cultured youngster some of the advantages of a good home environment; many libraries have set up storytelling hours. But the country as a whole has not attacked this question of making reading a normal part of life, a pleasant and also stimulating area of development. Nor do I mean merely instituting a reading corner or offering Saturday morning story hours at the library, good as these are. What we need is for the youngster who comes from a home where he does not have reading as an intimate part of living to be given just this experience, regularly, purposefully.

Obviously, some of our culturally different homes are highly literate, though the literature may sometimes be in a foreign language. As immigration decreases, such homes decrease. The large group of those we are considering at this conference come from semi-illiterate homes where there is a strong though unconscious tendency to counteract what the school is building up. This is especially true when the family is becoming more prosperous and external values are more evident. The uneducated adults literally do not know how to supply anything but cars, furniture, television sets, food, and clothing. These attractive externals become substitutes for reading.

A second aspect of the limitation which the school must recognize is related to the one just discussed: a lack of familiarity with those pieces which form a common culture and which are often basic to understanding mature literature. These include such pieces as *Mother Goose* rhymes, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Andersen's Tales*, *The Christmas Carol*, the more famous myths, the stories of King Arthur, the great Old Testament stories, and some of the New Testament parables. References to these and other well-known characters and events appear repeatedly in both current and historical English prose. I have found it necessary at times to require a college student to discover Alice and Mother Goose. Schools do fairly well in presenting some strictly American myths and those of the Greek gods, but little is done with the kinds of stories which permeate the reading of the fortunate child's home.

Limitations in reading are often related to limitations in theater—legitimate or screen. Economic conditions and attitudes of the public often mean that differently cultured young people and their families do not see even the better motion pictures. Anyone who has made even a cursory study of the grade C pictures prevalent in our poorer districts knows the sad state of these offerings. Television has at least the virtue of serving all alike. In high schools with a preponderance of culturally different students, there is no reason why a prosperous society such as ours cannot provide the best that the screen has to offer adolescents. Whether this is done by providing tickets or by special school facilities does not matter. It can be done. (And I do not mean that we should rely on a broken down film of a piece of *David Copperfield* shown in a half-darkened classroom.)

We have, therefore, two special goals—or subgoals—for the culturally different student: to realize that reading is a normal and agreeable part of both school and home life, and a need to have acquaintance with the better literature of early childhood. Along with these is a need to share in the drama (and art and dance) of the majority. These needs can be met if they are recognized. I have seen this done as late as high school and college without embarrassing the student.

A somewhat more advanced but increasingly important aspect of reading needs, however, lies in the social scene of the book. Until one lives within a subculture, one does not sense that every culture has standards and defenses of its own. Let me illustrate. Many Negro students are more interested in honors within the school they attend than in any kind of national standing. Achievement within the local culture means admiration from those they know and love. This is one of the problems of the segregated school—the tendency of students to be satisfied with this relative success which is emotionally satisfying in the only world they know well. A comparable situation is often found in a college or even a large university where campus status becomes more important than academic achievement. Within a tight group, with constant pressures from outside, group rather than national standards become highly important.

The role of literature—great or minor—is to take the reader into a world beyond his immediate reach. We claim to do this through our usual literature courses, but far too often we confine these introductions to the world of the far past or far distance. It takes no great amount of adjustment to talk about *Silas Marner*—remote, stereotyped—as having traits similar to ours; but it is far more difficult to identify with and understand someone in a book which depicts a current situation outside one's culture group. Please do not misunderstand: I believe in teaching the great classic writers—Homer, Vergil, Shakespeare, Tolstoi, Moliere. But I also believe there is great need for the lesser book, the less universal if you will, what Ruskin called "the book of the hour." Such pieces, introducing the culturally different student to the daily life of that larger society which he does not know, should form an important part of his reading program.

Current reading need not, in any sense, mean a watered-down program. There is good material available, material which will test the thinking of any student. The curriculum in English must be sufficiently flexible that the young reader may be led to find what is socially as well as intellectually broadening to him. Much of our increasingly rigid program in reading—increasingly rigid in some schools, at any rate—tends toward expression of universal truths rather than those more intimate understandings which really determine our thinking and, in part, behavior. A verbal success thus covers lack of change.

A course in reading (literature), like that in speech, can appear to be criticism of the home or a different culture unless within that reading there are books from the specific different group. We are beginning to recognize this nationally through our world literature courses. Too often, however, these seem to imply that literature in the world outside the English-speaking one stopped rather abruptly with the coming of the modern era. There is no good reason why the child from the Italian home, for example, should not read, as a part of his normal work, translations of some of the great modern Italian novels and stories. The amount of literature written by American Negroes is not large, but it includes a small body of both prose and poetry well worth reading. The student from the different culture has a right to hear these pieces discussed along with others from the majority culture.

If there are some who insist that these social values are not the responsibility of the school and that an intellectual approach is all we should attempt, let me explain. One of our professed goals is adult reading. If the young reader does not discover books as a way of entering a larger world, and if to him the potential reading field is the past only, we have failed in our goal to teach literature as more than intellectual adornment.

## Writing

We approach now the third and decidedly most difficult area in English—writing. Here in general the same approaches are made as in any writing class, and with the same goals. However, two differences in approach are essential: much closer analysis of the relation of writing errors to speech, and much more use of reading as a device for improvement. These matters may be thought of as a change in goals, including as they do a sustained attention to those written and spoken forms which the larger group can take for granted. The reading of fiction, especially if it contains good conversation, makes for constantly expanding experience with many varieties of English. Again goals relate to processes. May I illustrate.

It is my experience and the experience of many teachers I know that a student from a different culture can learn to do fairly well with a paper based on reading. Temporarily he follows the patterns of the writer he has just read. He may paraphrase, imitate, and thus for the time being follow standard sentence patterns. This is not to say that he copies out sentences, though this process has at times been noted with both different and not-different student groups. But granting entirely honest writing, one can note the strong influence of the source. This may be satisfactory up to a point. Franklin thought imitation the ideal way of learning to write.

But the differently cultured student, given a topic dealing with his own neighborhood, his daily living, tends to return to his home speech and the errors around him there. Consequently, we must include within our goals for him the ability to write about simple, homely matters, as well as about more formal topics. This goal holds within it great values, a bringing to the written page rich folk expressions and metaphor. I would not eliminate these.

## Learning About Language

Inevitably the question is asked: What about grammar? Obviously we waste time discussing rules with a student whose own sentence patterns make these rules meaningless and remote. Modern structural grammar, beginning with basic patterns, offers a sensible approach to both speech and writing. Here the culturally different child, through approaching English structure freshly, may actually have an advantage; but his course needs careful planning to avoid complete confusion. As of now he is too often plunged into an abstract analysis of a language whose basic patterns he does not recognize. The results are not only fruitless but often actually negative.

It is obvious that in this field of learning to use language structures correctly we need the work of experts and a program designed for those who come to us with a definitely substandard version or a mixture of two tongues. A program based on sound modern scholarship might take a little time and some expenditure, but in the long run it would save money, effort, and discouragement for all.

Underlying good speaking, reading, and writing is some understanding of the difference between fact and judgment, between information and opinion, between the word and that for which it stands, in a word, semantics. These understandings are of great importance to the culturally different groups, where external pressures increase emotional tension and a tendency to confuse feeling with reality of the event. Usually the fallacy in generalizing on the basis of one case is readily understood, since this fault is one from which the minority group suffers. But sound semantic understanding is by no means beyond this differently cultured student, and is of inestimable value to him in understanding himself and others.

## Summary

The aims of the program for the culturally different student are intrinsically the same as those for the majority group: ability to speak good colloquial language; ability to read the various types of literature and to have some understanding of the values making for quality, to have sufficient acquaintance with selected great writers to know that they exist, and to have a desire to know them better; ability to communicate clearly in writing and to understand enough about English to use its structures correctly and logically. Finally, the aim should include a sense of responsibility for reading and a zest to know more thereby.

Certainly not all of the culturally different will achieve to an equal degree. Some, like children in other groups, will achieve little more than minimal abilities and understandings. They will prefer television to print, and talking to writing. They will find their counterparts in the larger group, the not-different, since there is a constant percentage of dull in any group. Probably for another generation we may expect a larger proportion of poor achievers from the differently cultured, but that is an uncertain matter depending upon the seriousness with which we attack the problem. Others will, however, achieve fame and fortune. We have only to look over the names of political, social, and artistic leaders today to know that they include many who are or were culturally different. Some have probably succeeded because of their very difficulties and differences. Our aim is to shorten the period of difficulties as rapidly as possible. If, in so doing, we also retain those differences which have social value—and certainly there are such—our society will be the richer.

# Research and the Problem

# Research and Its Implications

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The education of unprivileged children in great cities is not a new concern in the United States, though recent urban population changes give the subject added dimensions. On December 11, 1809, De Witt Clinton addressed the Public School Society of New York City, assembled to celebrate the opening of a new building for the first free nondenominational school in that already crowded "commercial emporium." His address affirmed the belief in equality of educational opportunity, which has been a persistent theme in American democratic thought and a stubborn force in American social policy. With a somewhat patronizing reference to the aristocratic biases of Europe, Clinton proudly acclaimed the new nation where, he assured his listeners, "no privileged orders . . . exist to interpose barriers between the people, and to create distinct classifications in society." The natural obligation of this enviable condition, he declared, was "the necessity of dispensing, without distinction, the blessings of education" to the children of the city's poor.

One hundred and fifty-three years later, the promise, and the problem, still engage us. Like Clinton, who recognized the special vulnerability and the urgent need of poor children in the great cities of his time, we, too, feel constrained to reexamine the meaning of equality of education for the disadvantaged children in the much larger cities of today.

What has research to say about teaching these children? To date, very little; certainly much less than the dimensions and the seriousness of the problem demand. There is, however, sufficient research to describe the problem; a smaller body of research that seeks explanations, causes, processes; and a very limited number of studies which set up experimental conditions designed to produce desired change.

The most common type of research inquiry relevant to teaching underprivileged children has been the descriptive survey. These studies have examined the relation of socioeconomic level to intelligence quotients, to achievement on standardized tests, to school grades, to distribution among various types of school curriculums, and to years of schooling completed. Their results confirm our worst suspicions.

To begin with, these children, especially in the central city areas, go to slum schools. A disproportionate number of the schools they attend are substandard in physical resources, including libraries, and even more important, they are frequently substandard in teaching personnel (16, 64).[1] But even where buildings are new and teachers fully prepared and well-meaning, the educational system operates to the disadvantage of lower class children.

The studies documenting these generalizations have relied primarily on school records, which are sometimes, researchers point out, difficult to obtain since schools are not eager to expose their failures. Other studies, also of a survey nature, are based on the opinions and expressed interests and attitudes of this youth population themselves and, to a limited extent, of their parents and teachers. Some of these deal explicitly with attitudes toward school, school teachers, and school subjects. Studies of this kind are usually based on questionnaires, interviews, and various projective instruments designed to elicit attitudes by indirection.

Generalizations on the causes and dynamics of lower class children's school performance and persistence are of two kinds. On the one hand, there are sociological generalizations based on interpretations of the surveys already mentioned, and on studies of the values, aspirations, and social organization of lower class groups—including gangs—and on the conflicting values, expectations, and organization of the school as a middle-class institution. The implications of these studies have received little attention from educators, except for the recent interest in the emerging evidence of class differences in achievement motivation. On the other hand, there are the studies, psychologically oriented, which seek explanations for these children's educational difficulties in the inadequacies experienced during early parent-child relationships.

Research directed explicitly to the particular problems these children encounter in learning English is very limited indeed. There are a few studies which reveal the retarding effect which the verbally impoverished home environments have on the reading readiness of children. A few other studies reveal the specific hazards presented by the middle- and upper-class vocabulary and language patterns prevalent in most intelligence and achievement tests. Despite extensive studies of sex- and age-related reading interests of children, almost nothing is known about the relation of these interests to children's social-class origins. Studies applying the method of content analysis to reading texts and to radio and television programs show that these materials are middle-class oriented at best; at worst, contaminated by class, ethnic, and racial biases. Although there is an impressive body of research on regional differences in vocabulary, speech, and idiom, including dictionaries of the argots of certain atypical groups—thieves and musicians among them—there is little analogous research on class differences in language.

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[1] Numbers in parentheses are keyed to references in the Bibliography at the end of this article.

Missing from this research inventory, though most urgently needed, are examples of research on the dynamics of language learning among children from different socioeconomic, and hence different verbal, milieus. Although survey studies indicate class differences in how the individual regards his world, and the extent of his familiarity with "standard" vocabulary and language patterns, we have no systematic descriptions of the development of these different patterns. What is needed is an application of the detailed observations, experiments, and clinical inquiries of a Piaget to determine the absence or presence of class-differentiated language development.

Mounting concern with the educational disabilities of lower-class children has stimulated the development of a variety of so-called "experimental" programs for them; but controlled research on the merit of specific programs is rare, and evaluations of their comparative effectiveness are not yet available. In any event, broad-gauged programs for underprivileged children, like the Higher Horizons program of New York City, involve so many variables that they almost defy application of traditional experimental research models. For programs of this scope, it will probably be necessary to settle for the evidence provided by action research methods: the evaluation of participants in the program and the achievement beyond normal expectations of those for whom the program "worked."

This is the range of research relevant to the education of lower-class children and youth. What are some of the specific findings which future planning should take into account?

Numerous studies, beginning about 1929 and including such extensive reports as those of the Lynds, Lloyd Warner, Allison Davis, Gardner, Dollard, Stendler, Hollingshead, Havighurst, and, most recently, Sexton have amassed extensive documentation for the generalization that children from the lower end of our income spectrum do not sufficiently benefit from the deceptively equal opportunities afforded by our universal, free, compulsory educational system. The details of these educational casualties will not be repeated here. They are readily accessible and widely, even though not widely enough, known. Their message is clear; lower-class children are educationally disadvantaged.

However, the extent to which their disadvantage is a verbal one, does bear repetition, especially for English teachers. Lower-class children's reading handicap is apparent even before formal reading instruction is begun. Patricia Sexton's study (57) of social-class influences on placement, achievement, and persistence in the schools of Big City, one of America's largest cities, located in the Midwest, describes in some detail the picture test used to assess children's readiness for reading. The test is based on a widely accepted principle in reading, that reading builds on the child's recognition of the relationship between object, graphic symbol for the object, and the printed or written "name" of the object. About a third of the pictures in this test are of animals (surely all children know about animals) but, as Sexton points out, the pictures feature animals that the city slum child has never seen: chickens, pigs, horses, and also bears, giraffes, camels, elephants. Unfortunately, as Sexton reminds us, many slum children go neither to the country nor to the zoo. Other pictures in this test are equally outside the recognition vocabulary of lower-class children. How are these children to identify and tell the uses of the pictures and names of a candle holder, piano, castle, lighthouse, typewriter, scale, or even the steepled church, which, as Sexton notes, is unlike their store-front church?

Their difficulties with these mysterious objects are heightened by the fact that these children have had little if any of the middle-class child's experience with picture books at home. Even though all the animals and objects were like those they saw at home and in their neighborhood, their lack of experience in "seeing" a dog or cat in a linear drawing would handicap them. It is on the basis of such tests as these that children are started on the long path to reading. The consequence, of course, of lower-class children's poor showing on the reading readiness test is to delay their beginning, thus giving their advantaged classmates a head start.

Allison Davis, (19), Eels, (24), and others have called attention not only to vocabulary bias, but to the further bias in items which call for analogies, opposites, syllogisms, and definitions. These are outside the experience of many lower-class children: "Which word means the opposite of pride?" "Order is to confusion as——is to war." "The saying, 'Little strokes fell great oaks' means?" These test items are patently "out-of-bounds" both in vocabulary and in structure for lower-class children.

Persuaded of the reasonableness of these objections, some test makers undertook to develop "culture free" tests. Their efforts were made in two directions: the use of tests largely or wholly nonverbal in nature, and the "translation" of verbal intelligence tests into the language of lower class children. For example, Davis' substitution for the analogy item "Cub is to bear, as gosling is to—fox, grouse, goose, rabbit, duck," was: "Puppy goes with dog like kitten goes with—fox, goose, cat, rabbit, duck." Unfortunately, these logically promising approaches do not seem to have removed the test handicap experienced by lower-class children (63). Results of research using these types of tests are contradictory; certainly they are inconclusive. Lower-class children do little if any better on these than on other intelligence tests. It seems clear that the cultural biases affecting lower-class children's scores on these tests are not limited to those of language; other cultural factors are also operative.

A study just initiated by Gerald Lesser at Hunter College, under a grant from the U.S. Office of Education, aims to explore differences in test performance in five different mental abilities of children in different ethnic and socioeconomic groups, and to follow up the classroom performance of these children. The hope is that it may be possible to identify group differences and provide group norms that will not be discriminatory by class or ethnic origin. (It is important to note that Lesser's research design calls for the administration of tests by psychologists from the same ethnic backgrounds as those of the children to be tested.)

The effect of this verbal bias is, of course, not limited to intelligence tests; instances of class-related verbal deficiencies are familiar to teachers at every level, though, as Carroll has observed, much more systematic study of them needs to be undertaken. According to Carroll "surprisingly little attention has been paid to linguistic variations within the normal range of the social class structure" (10, p. 118). Almost certainly differences in connotations, idioms, and sentence patterns, such as those Bossard (5) found to characterize the family dinner conversations of different social classes, affect children's approach to and facility in handling the patterns of language taught in school.

The verbal deprivation of lower-class children begins, as all language learning begins, with their early experiences in speech. A 1948 study by Irwin (33) of the development of speech in infancy reports that, while initial development was age-related only, development during the second year revealed social-class differences. In a more recent study (67) of lower-class children's speech development, Templin reports that sentence length and complexity of sentence structure are related to socioeconomic level. The Institute for Developmental Studies, under the direction of Dr. Martin Deutsch, currently investigating the language patterns of lower class children, notes that they are "poor in the use of verbs" (51, p. 76). Newton's empirically based description of the "verbal destitution" of entering students in a Negro college lists these lacks: limited vocabularies, chiefly Anglo-Saxon or Middle-English in origin; impoverished use of descriptive or qualifying words; inability to comprehend figurative language (45). Bernstein's analysis of lower-class speech in England leads him to conclude that such speech is not merely "different," but deficient (3). To describe it merely as a dialect, though it may be this as well, is to miss the fact that the simplifications in language structure characteristic of lower-class speech make it almost impossible to formulate intellectual generalizations (14, p. 436).

The verbal deprivation of lower-class children is, of course, more deep-seated than the absence of picture books or dinner conversations at candle-lit tables suggests. Milner's study (57, p. 314) of the family backgrounds of low and high scorers on a reading readiness test confirmed the expected absence of storybooks in the homes of lower-class low scorers. Also he examined the emotional climate and experiences of these children and found that the lower-class children in this study not only lacked storybooks and the experience of being read to by parents but they also had more negative feelings generally about their parents. They recalled physical punishment administered by their parents, and had few recollections of parents' or other adults' expression of affection toward them. What Srole (62) terms the "complex of poverty" exposes these children more frequently to certain types of negative experiences at home than middle- or upper-class children are likely to encounter. There is conclusive evidence that lower-class groups have a high rate of family dislocations. Desertion, separation, divorce, familial violence, and death are commonplace.

In families which are broken, disturbed, and overburdened, a parent spends little time with the children, especially in conversation. Thus it is not surprising that a number of researchers have found that many lower-class children feel isolated and rejected by their parents. Aside from the general damage to the child's confidence and opportunity to learn in such situations, the quality of his initial family relationships may be crucial in his language development (30, 33, 47, 57, 66). Parsons and Bales (47) suggest that the initial phases of language development are dependent on a successful love and dependency relationship between the child and his mother. In Parsons' model of the parental roles in the family constellation, the mother is conceived as the "expressive" figure and as such is central in the child's reciprocal expressive and communicative development. This theory, an extension of the theories of George H. Mead, is entirely consonant with clinical research evidence on the retardation of expressive and responsive activities generally and of speech specifically among institutionalized infants.

In the face of these environmental deprivations and their effect on the child's verbal development and capacity, the school may be tempted to conclude that it can hardly be held accountable for the language deficiencies that are apparent throughout the child's school career. An examination of the record, however, suggests that the school not only fails to compensate for the lower-class child's initial verbal disadvantage, but in fact compounds it. A comparison of mean reading scores for third-, sixth-, and eighth-grade children in school in lower- and middle-class neighborhoods in New York City bears out this charge. At third-, sixth-, and eighth-grade levels the reading test scores of children in the white, higher income schools were above grade level; whereas, the scores of pupils in the underprivileged Negro and Puerto Rican schools were below grade level. What is more disconcerting is the fact that mean scores for the underprivileged group fall farther below grade level and below the means of the white, higher income group at each testing point (64). Comparable evidence is presented in Sexton's study of Big City. Sexton found a direct relation between four different income-groups and their composite elementary achievement scores. As in the case of the New York City study, differences in favor of higher income groups increased from grade to grade. Even more significant is Sexton's finding that lower income children's scores are most depressed on the subsection on reading; their scores on the work skills and the arithmetic sections are, relative to their composite scores, better than those of the high income groups (57). Thus it appears that lower-class children are particularly disadvantaged verbally and that the regular procedures of the school have not served to improve their situation. Moreover, the initial bias of reading readiness and intelligence tests, compounded by schooling that leaves them further disabled in reading year by year, may even debar them from qualifying for remedial reading instruction. Although most large cities offer remedial instruction, these facilities are sometimes limited to children who must qualify on the basis of a minimal or promising IQ score and other factors.

As their better performance in arithmetic achievement tests suggests, these children are teachable. There is evidence, as shown in a study by Haggard (29), that as little as 3 hours' training in test taking enabled disadvantaged children to improve their test scores markedly. These changes were achieved, in Haggard's study, not only by test practice, but also by improving the rapport between tester and child, and by having the tester read test items aloud while pupils followed the text in their booklets.

Before leaving the subject of the discriminatory effect of traditional verbal tests in handicapping the lower-class child's chances to profit from his schooling, one should note that, however well IQ and reading achievement scores may predict school grades, they seem to have little relation to some types of creativity. Extensive studies undertaken as part of the talent search in the sciences and the arts have demonstrated that creative mental abilities are not those measured by intelligence tests; they indicate also that creativity is not necessarily related positively to higher income status. A recent study by Davidson, Greenberg, and Gerver of "good" and "poor" achievers in the lower-class population of a Harlem school found ample evidence of creativity—particularly among the poor achievers (18).

Certainly there is nothing to be gained by ignoring or playing down the research evidence that lower-class children are deprived, and that an important aspect of their deprivation is verbal. Research provides a clear mandate for schools, and English teachers particularly, to seek out methods that will enable these children to overcome this handicap.

Most teachers do wish to offer this kind of help. English teachers presumably agree with Fries' observation that language habits are widely used as a basis for making status judgments and that the school has assumed an obligation to provide the child "no matter what his original social background and speech" with the language habits that constitute a passport to social mobility (26, p. 14). Teachers would like to offer this kind of help, but their efforts in this direction seem often to end in frustration. Their good intentions, their sympathy, their encouragement are often rejected by the very children they are eager to help. When this rejection occurs, it is probably because the efforts of the school and the individual teacher, representing one set of values and methods, collide with a different set of values and mores. It is for this reason that the problems of educating lower-class children have been discussed, especially since the 1930's, in a cultural context.

Numerous articles and a recent book on the subject refer to these children as "culturally deprived." The present conference, however, is focused on the problems of the "culturally different." The difference in terminology is, of course, not a casual but a critical one.

With regard to American culture our ideas tend to be highly selective and rather rigidly prescriptive. Teachers and schools appear to have a tacit conception of a unitary American culture which conforms to the protestant ethic. Individual achievement, orientation toward the future, faith in reason and enterprise are in fact characteristic of a dominant American ethos.

The dominance of this cultural pattern, which our schools understandably purvey, has tended to blind us to the fact that it is not the only cultural pattern in our Nation. Its most complete acceptance and expression are found in middle-income groups (11, p. 25; 38; 53,

p. 63). Those who have not internalized this particular pattern, whose behavior is not predicated on these values, are judged to be "culturally deprived"—if they are poor—or "Europeanized" or "effete"—if they are persons of affluence and lineage. The recognition that those whose beliefs and behavior do not conform to the dominant American culture pattern are not *without* a culture has genuine educational importance. As long as our perceptions are in terms of the *absence* of culture rather than in terms of the presence of different subcultures, we will seriously misjudge the dimensions of our problem. The difficulties experienced by teachers working with lower-class children would in large measure disappear if their efforts were directed toward children who merely lacked the elements of middle-class culture. The educational problem involved in teaching lower-class children is the much more difficult one of attempting to change cultural patterns already assimilated. The problem is similar to, though much more complex than, the problem of teaching a child to *change* the spelling or pronunciation of a word he has already learned. Thus it is important for English teachers, as for all teachers, to acquaint themselves with the educationally significant characteristics of the "different" culture which lower-class children bring with them to school. They need to learn, as Oscar Lewis so movingly documents in *The Children of Sanchez*, that the "culture of poverty" is not just economic deprivation and the absence of culture, but that as a subculture it has its own structure, strengths, and rationale.

A fairly extensive body of research during the past 30 years on lower-class culture has resulted in a number of generalizations from which teachers can, with caution, make teaching applications. One of the characteristics reportedly more common among lower-class than among middle- or upper-class children is their tendency toward physical rather than verbal communication. Miller and Swanson (41) describe lower-class children as more likely to attack problems, express feelings, and establish social relationships in physical or motor style. Whyte's classic study of the social dynamics in *Street Corner Society* illustrates lower-class disinclination to utilize such middle-class valued devices as parliamentary procedures and voting as a way of making decisions. "Doc," who was gang leader, was opposed to all that talk and stuff: "It's better not to have a constitution and vote on all these things . . . that way factions develop . . ." (73, p. 96).

Allison Davis describes aggressive behavior as a characteristic phase of the action-oriented behavior of the lower classes. His observation that "The lower classes commonly teach their children and adolescents to strike out with fist or knife and to be certain to hit first . . . " (20, p. 209) is often quoted by those who are inclined to view them with alarm. In fact, as a more recent study by Lesser (34) suggests, lower-class children do not accept or engage in violence indiscriminately. Lesser found that among a group of lower-class fifth- and sixth-grade children in New Haven schools aggressive behavior was not unreservedly popular. However, these boys were much more likely to accept aggression which was a response to the physical aggression of another and to accept "outburst" or tantrum behavior than they were to approve of verbal aggressions such as tattling, telling lies about others, or making verbal threats. The high value placed on action as a component of lower-class culture is consonant with the obvious economic assets of strength and endurance among those who earn a living by unskilled labor. It is particularly important as a symbol of masculinity among lower-class boys.

Related lower-class values cluster around an ethic of "live for today" in which the present is valued above the future, in which immediate gratifications are more attractive than those which must be delayed, and in which job aspirations are keyed to material, extrinsic benefits rather than to long-range, often intangible personal benefits—such as congeniality, interest, self-satisfaction. Whyte's (72) comparison of "corner" boys, representing lower-class culture, and "college" boys, who had begun to assimilate middle-class values, illustrates the difference in these two groups' attitudes toward money. For the "corner" boy, money is to spend, to share; the "college" boy regards it as something to save and as a commodity that each individual is to provide for himself. Albert Cohen's study (13) of the culture of lower-class delinquent boys reveals similar values. He quotes an unpublished study by one of his students in which junior high school boys of the lower class and middle class were asked their choices among a variety of behaviors posed to test acceptance or rejection of middle-class social values. Lower-class boys repeatedly made choices indicating their preference for spending money on immediate pleasures rather than saving it for delayed pleasures, for lending money to friends even if they were uncertain that it would be repaid, and for group rather than solitary activities. These choices are part of the same culture that leads parents of such children to organize informal credit associations and to invent the "rent party." Time, too, is not husbanded or made to "count" as it often is by the middle class; time is one of the few commodities that the poor have to "waste." As Brofenbrenner (8) observes in his summary of 25 years of research on the psychological effects of social-class differences in child-rearing, lower-class and middle-class children are taught very different lessons about gratification deferment, time-saving, orderliness, and self-control.

Recent research in this field has especially emphasized social-class differences in aspirations and achievement motivation. A number of studies have followed the direction set by McClelland (38, 39), who used a series of pictures to elicit stories which were "scored" in terms of references to competition with a standard of excellence; individual, unique achievement; and long-term commitment to a task. In studies using this approach, lower-class children score much lower than middle-class children; however, these tests are subject to the same reservations that have been directed toward intelligence tests. Like them, these tests are middle-class oriented. As critics have observed, the pictures shown focus on achievement patterns characteristic of a limited range of our population, and the scoring criteria sharpen the bias. That is to say, neither scoring nor pictures provide opportunities for lower-class individuals to project their achievement drives in terms of models and goals within their cultural context. A test which selects independent achievement as the key criterion is unlikely to identify children from environments in which cooperation and group solidarity are prime virtues. It is also possible that the most important difference between lower and middle classes lies in precisely this value distinction. Not speech, dress, leisure, or possessions—all of which are becoming increasingly uniform, but different ideals of social advancement and the social process, Raymond Williams believes—constitute the single most important distinction between these classes:

> Development and advantages are not individually but commonly interpreted. . . . The human fund is regarded as in all respects common, and freedom of access to it as a right. . . . (73, p. 345).

Also characteristic of lower-class social organization is the process of reciprocity, the tacit understanding that assistance given one's friends is repaid in reciprocal "favors," proferred when one is, in turn, in need. As in the study cited by Cohen (13), it is not expected that loans, "treats," or assistance in fights will be immediately repaid in kind, but rather that they weave a web of loyalty within which help may be demanded as a right long afterwards. If this kind of loyalty reminds us of that honored at King Arthur's Round Table in Camelot, perhaps it is fitting.

Because of the particular implications for education, another characteristic of lower-class culture should be mentioned. This is the relatively negative attitude many members have toward planning, rationality, and control of their environment. Living under conditions in which a major portion of the family's energy and inventiveness is required to meet each day's basic requirements is not conducive to the development of habits of planning. The cycles of mass unemployment that strike the lower classes first and longest do not lead them to view man as master of his environment. Acceptance of present conditions and caution with respect to aspirations are the virtues of this way of life, though in the middle-class book they read "submission" and "apathy." The events that mark the lives of lower-class families are, for the most part, not planned; they "just happen." Experiences with sex, pregnancy, even marriage, are unplanned, as research in progress under the direction of James F. Short (59) at the University of Chicago indicates; and they are accepted as such. Lower-class parents, according to a questionnaire survey by George Psathas (48) directed to tenth-grade New Haven boys, do not involve their teenage sons in family planning and decisions as do middle-class families. Achievement, from the viewpoint of lower-class individuals, is as likely to be a matter of luck as a result of planning. "Que será, será," comes close to expressing a prevailing point of view. At the same time, lower-class children tend to have developed, of necessity, a kind of self-sufficiency uncommon among more protected adolescents. Early experiences with sex, responsibility for younger siblings, lack of parental supervision of recreational and school activities give these children a precocious maturity that makes much schooling—and much school reading—unpalatable.

The restricted occupational aspirations of lower class boys, substantiated in a number of studies (11, 22, 32, 35, 53, 56), of course affects their educational aspirations, since education in both lower and middle classes in America tends to be valued as a means to occupational advancement and social mobility. It is not surprising, therefore, that the peculiarly middle-class image of the "educational ladder" has lacked appeal for many lower-class boys. The "ladder" image implies a solitary climber and a worthwhile occupational goal at the top; for the socially and economically disadvantaged, the image may rather be of a ladder leading nowhere (73, p. 351).

Although much remains to be done, as Carroll (10) has said, to explore the specific characteristics of lower-class language, Cohn's discussion is pertinent to the consideration of the positive differences characteristic of lower-class culture. While recognizing the verbal deprivations already mentioned, Cohn notes that lower-class language has rich expressive potentialities. He reminds us that middle- and upper-class people and writers frequently borrow the idiom of the lower classes because of its emotive power.

These and comparable positive characteristics of the culturally different children and youth in our classrooms should be part of the professional knowledge and understanding of English teachers and of all other teachers. At the same time, it is important that teachers avoid the easy generalizations that tend to settle around social class descriptions and thus obscure the individual child. These characterizations of social classes must be tentatively accepted and cautiously applied. Although they serve the useful purpose of reminding us that the deprivations and cultural characteristics of the children we teach are not peculiar to any one ethnic or racial group, they should not lead us to assume that these characteristics describe all children from a peculiar income or occupational group. The studies from which these generalizations are drawn are not based on exactly comparable groups: "lower-class" categories may include various combinations of unemployed, as well as unskilled and even semiskilled occupational groups. Furthermore, there are lower-class children, however categorized, who, by means as yet unclear, have assimilated middle-class values—sometimes with a vengeance. These are the children we identify as "overachieving," whose families our grandparents used to call the "deserving" poor. On the other hand, the identification of middle-class values with the themes of the protestant ethic seems to be growing increasingly tenuous. Traditional middle-class virtues of independence and personal enterprise are undergoing a change in our affluent society in the direction of security and popularity, a change not merely hypothesized by social critics like Reisman and Whyte, but demonstrated in research on adolescent preferences.

Nevertheless, with due regard to the qualifications necessary whenever we endeavor to describe whole groups of people, recognition of the cultural values of lower-class children is important and at least potentially useful to those genuinely desirous of helping them to learn. The child's culture, like Mary's little lamb, goes everywhere that Mary goes; and though Mary's teacher could dismiss the lamb and still continue to teach Mary, the teacher of the culturally different child cannot dismiss or denigrate his culture without turning the child, too, out of school.

Although no one suggests that teachers and schools intend to discriminate against lower-class children, there is ample evidence that our educational system does, in fact, frequently operate in this manner. In part this condition is the effect of actual prior deprivation—economic, affectional, and verbal. In large part, however, it is most meaningfully perceived as a consequence of the conflicting values and role expectations precipitated when children reared in a lower-class culture are expected to adjust to a middle-class school (46). The school is a middle-class institution, not merely in its general orientation, but also in its administrative practices, its personnel, its controls and rewards, and its teaching materials (31, 49, 70). The school, which reinforces the behavioral patterns already well established in middle-class families, presents the lower-class child with a set of expectations unlike anything he has previously encountered. Middle-class children come to school prepared to learn to read; lower-class children enter a setting which is foreign to them in goals, methods, and values. It is not surprising that reading comes off second best. Middle-class children start school to a considerable degree "in the know"; lower-class children enter an unknown territory. For many of these children school remains a strange world increasingly disliked as they grow older. David, whose eighth-grade teacher asked him to write a composition on "What I think about the school and myself," says it all:

> The old school can go and jump in the lake if its deep and I dont like most all the teachers in school. . . . Its all right if the school blow up with a hand grenade, or the school would burn up. Thats all I can say for now.

David signed his composition, "Nobody" (30, p. 59).

We have already noted the ways in which the middle-class bias of the school's testing procedures begins the long sorting process through which the lower-class child tends to be retarded, restricted, and rejected. What are some of the other practices which constitute particular handicaps for these children? The most comprehensive studies of the middle-class organization and operation of a school system are those of Hollingshead (31), Warner (69, 70), and Havighurst (30). The evidence from these detailed analyses of specific school systems is well known, and the findings of these researchers have been confirmed or reinforced by numerous smaller studies.

Perhaps the central factor in the school's reinforcement of middle-class values stems from the fact that, as Rich (49) points out, teachers are predominantly middle class in origin or, because of the nature of their education, have thoroughly assimilated middle-class values. Wickman's early study of *Children's Behaviors and Teachers' Attitudes*, though not designed to investigate social-class influences, nevertheless shows that among those child behaviors which teachers regard as most serious are uncontrolled, often aggressive, behaviors which tend to be more frequent among lower-class children. Becker's more recent interview study of the ways in which teachers in a large urban school system regard children's behavior found that teachers themselves differentiated three socioeconomic levels among the children they taught. These teachers reported that they felt more successful with children from higher income groups and that with the other groups they felt they were failing. The teachers' perceptions of class differences are clearly illustrated in their responses:

> "In a neighborhood like this there's something about the children . . . you feel like you're accomplishing so much more. . . .
>
> "They're very nice here. . . . They are taught respect in the home . . . they are not brilliant, but they are easy to work with. . . .

> "They don't have the proper kind of study habits. . . . They can't seem to apply themselves. . . ." (1, p. 454f.)

Moreover, the teachers in this study indicated that their perception and practice of their professional role differed in these different settings. Teachers viewed their function with lower-class groups as chiefly disciplinary; they tend to expect little work or effort from lower-class children. They expected that the gap between what the students *should* know and what they *do* know would become wider year by year.

Davidson and Lang (17) in a recent study of the interpersonal perceptions of teachers and children in a New York City school found that teachers' ratings of children's achievement and classroom behavior were directly related to the children's social class. Furthermore, teachers rated "undesirable" the classroom behavior of lower-class children even when their academic achievements were good. Perhaps more important in suggesting the character of the dynamics involved in this situation is the fact, reported in this study, that the children themselves realized their teachers' attitudes toward them. Children who perceived their teachers' attitudes to be low had lower perceptions of themselves, achieved less, and behaved worse than their more favored classmates.

Teachers serve another function, that of occupational and prestige models. The fact that they are predominantly middle-class (49), that lower-class children have, even in slum schools, relatively little opportunity to see representatives of their own social groups on the staff, teaches a lesson that does not go unlearned. "Doc," the Italian leader of the "corner" boys studies by Whyte, sums it up:

> You don't know how it feels to grow up in a district like this. You go to the first grade—Miss O'Rourke. Second grade—Miss Casey. Third grade—Miss Chalmers. Fourth grade—Miss Mooney. And so on. At the fire station it is the same. None of them are Italians. . . . In the settlement houses none of the people with authority are Italians. . . . When the Italian boy sees that none of his own people have the good jobs, why should he think he is as good as the Irish or the Yankees? It makes him feel inferior.
>
> If I had my way, I would have half the school teachers Italians and three-quarters of the people in the settlement. Let the other quarter be there just to show that we're in America. (72, p. 276.)

"Doc's" comment points out that teachers are disproportionately drawn from more favored groups in a community, though there is evidence that the teacher population is now becoming somewhat more heterogeneous. "Doc" also reminds us that teachers are predominantly female in the elementary school. Even in high school the proportion of men to women teachers is just about even. Foreign visitors commonly observe that the American school system is to a considerable extent a feminized institution. For various reasons, but partly because their homes often lack fathers or have fathers of very low status, lower-class boys especially tend to rebel and reject a feminized school. Sexton's study of dropouts in Big City confirms what other studies and our own experience tell us, that boys, particularly lower-class boys, are the least successful of all youth in our present system. In Big City three times as many boys as girls are failed. Many teachers seem to find boys much more "difficult" than girls.

Though teachers' attitudes are crucial, particularly in the early school years, acceptance or rejection by their classmates also influences children's and adolescents' regard for themselves and attitude toward school. The evidence, from Elmtown (31) and Jonesville (69), that lower-class children and adolescents are underchosen by peers and by teachers, and that their participation in extracurricular activities is far less than that of their more affluent fellows is extensive. It is echoed in Davis and Dollard's analysis of the development of Negro youth in the urban South (22), and in Coleman's national survey of junior high school students (15). But this generalization is based on studies in which the schools were, at least to a considerable degree, heterogeneous in population. Metropolitan slum schools reflect the effects of urban blight in their increasingly homogeneous rosters of racially and economically segregated children.

Even in the high schools which are not neighborhood bound, the social class sorting process results in class-segregated high school populations. In such schools as these, lower-class children may be spared rejection by their more privileged classmates; on the other hand, they are at the same time deprived of the possible stimulation of middle- and upper-class peer and parental models. The effort to redress this imbalance is part of the rationale of the open-enrollment policy of New York City. Conant (16) observes that the substandard conditions of the "sending" school, populated entirely by lower-class children, is not improved by this policy. He also criticizes this practice because it further depresses these schools by stripping them of those children who are achieving to a degree, and who might serve to lift the aspirations of their classmates. A study by Wilson (74) of a school in the San Francisco-Oakland Bay area suggests that underprivileged children attending schools where there are substantial numbers of middle-class children do tend to assimilate middle-class educational and occupational aspirations. Certainly there is no research evidence to support the argument sometimes heard that it is "kinder" to lower-class children not to submit them to competition with more advantaged groups. In any event, the community outside the school does not protect them against competition, and even within the slum school they are confronted with teaching materials and objectives that require them to measure up to and accept middle-class standards.

Studies of children's textbooks have called attention to regional and class bias. The farm setting of elementary readers, to which early critics objected, has largely disappeared—only to be replaced by modern middle-class families and suburban settings.

There seems little doubt that many if not most of the books and anthologies used in high schools present characters whose environment, family patterns, problems, and aspirations may seem strange and remote to lower-class urban children. Efforts to make elementary readers more "realistic" by focusing content on the child's world may, in fact, because of their generally suburban or small town context, cause some children to regard these materials as fictitious—and possibly even fraudulent since they purport to be "real." If even "real" stories about families are "phony," how can the child be led to look to fiction as a help in understanding life? Further, if the idealized family in elementary readers presents a painful picture to the slum family child, he may learn to resist reading generally. Characters and themes in secondary anthologies also seem to deal, according to a study by Gleason (27), with a world in which only white, middle-, or upper-class families and individuals are worth writing about. One wonders, for example, how effective to lower-class urban adolescents some of the books suggested in a curriculum guide for secondary school reading may be. The list, "dealing with some of the serious personal problems" under such headings as "Physical Handicaps," and "Family Relationships," includes in its suggestions *The Secret Garden*, *Little Women*, *Anne of Green Gables*, and *The Yearling*. There are no suggestions for reading about the problems faced by children living on relief. The illustration provided teachers of junior high school English in another curriculum guide begins by telling the teacher to "suppose the child is expected to locate information about the appearance of a Chippendale chair." It is little wonder that so many calls from educators generally and from teachers of English in particular are heard for reading materials which include some that are indigenous to the backgrounds and interests of the reluctant readers in our urban schools. Some booklists, however, do feature books for this type of student. Among them are: John J. De Boer, Paul B. Hale, and Esther Landin, *Reading for Living: An Index to Reading Materials;* Ruth Strang, Ethlyne Phelps, and Dorothy Withrow, *Gateways to Readable Books;* George D. Spache, *Good Reading for Poor Readers;* Margaret M. Heaton, and Helen B. Lewis, *Reading Ladders for Human*

*Relations.* Of course social-class bias in instructional materials is by no means limited to English texts. As Saveth (55) found in a study of social studies texts, the characteristics of immigrants and portrayal of their motives for immigration too often gave "uncivic, uncivil, and untrue" impressions of the parents and grandparents of those for whom the books are intended.

Reisman, writing of the possibly negative results of urging upon children the "pious biographical portraits of exemplary persons and roles" characteristic of much middle-class oriented literature, has this to say:

> Thus, while some children learn from books and plays how to act in a career that will be different from that of their parents—or indeed that it will be possible to have such a career—other children, less able to perform in the characterologically prescribed ways, less self-disciplined and systematic, for instance, learn from precisely the same media how lost they are. (50, p. 98.)

Finally, though there seem to be no surveys of English teachers' attitudes toward different social class uses of English, it is probably reasonable to assume that condescending, rigid, and rejecting attitudes are more common than we would wish. Authorities in English have for some time been telling English teachers that it was not enough merely to present and attempt to enforce models of standard English in the belief that these children would thus be motivated to learn "better" English. Lloyd and Warfel's description of "educated English" vividly recreates lower-class reactions; it has been often quoted but, unfortunately, not often enough heeded:

> The sound of educated English stirs in them something less than admiration. . . . It is . . . the language of all who push them around, take their money, dole out charity, and try to make them feel like two cents while they are doing it, with looks and comments on their clothes, their manners, their housekeeping, and their talk. (36, p. 453.)

Recognition of the pervasiveness of this attitude may be what prompts well-educated, well-spoken lower-class individuals to drop into their original speech when it is important for them to communicate with lower-class friends or constituents who have not climbed the social language ladder.

We have on numerous occasions been advised that effective English teaching demands that we learn to listen to and to understand the native language patterns of those we would teach. This advice has been widely followed in programs designed to teach English as a second language. What has not been generally recognized is that for some native-born American children "standard" English is in fact much like a second language.

The research, chiefly sociological, that has been discussed so far, tells us that lower-class children come to school suffering from certain affectional and verbal deprivations, that the culture in which they have been reared, despite its positive qualities, is so different from the middle-class culture of the school that many are unable to learn, and that the schools to date have not found satisfactory ways to teach them.

Research directed specifically to the problems of teaching English to lower-class children is, in the face of its crucial importance, extremely scarce. James R. Squire, in a memorandum titled "Multi-Level Research in English: Imperatives for the Sixties," (61) includes "cultural deprivation and language learning" as one of seven major areas requiring study. He notes that this field, though increasingly recognized, lacks precise definition, and calls for systematic study of specific ways in which social class differences affect language learning.

Research specifically related to teaching English to lower-class children may be viewed in the light of two rather differently oriented questions. First, what are the specific difficulties that lower-class children encounter in learning to understand, speak, read, and write standard English, and what methods are effective in achieving desired changes? Second, is it possible to devise special educational methods and materials that will compensate for the differences and deficiencies in the lower-class child's environment which depress his motivation to learn the language arts?

Among the studies directed to the first of these questions is that undertaken by Ruth Golden and described in her book, *Improving Patterns of Language Usage* (28). The approach in this study was extremely direct. A list of about 100 terms and phrases characteristic of the speech of lower-class Negro students in Detroit high schools was identified. By means of a questionnaire these speech patterns were brought to the students' consciousness, and they were made aware that these practices constituted a social liability. With this as a basis, the students were provided with intensive practice in standard speech patterns and exposed to an English program rich in stimuli to speak and then to read and write on topics chosen for their special interest. The approach was logical, the program and teaching suggestions varied and practical. The research evidence on specific speech patterns of this group should be helpful in planning comparable programs with other lower-class groups.

Studies representative of the second approach to language learning and teaching tend to focus on the affective experiences and resultant self-concepts and attitudes toward language and language achievement. Ulibarri's study, *Teacher Awareness of Socio-Cultural Differences in Multi-Cultural Classrooms* (68), in New Mexico points to the need for understanding these dynamics. His investigation of the knowledge and attitudes of middle-class-oriented teachers revealed them to have little awareness of the "life space" of the minority group children in their classrooms. Though these teachers perceived their students' lack of motivation, difficulties with assigned texts, and language deficiencies, they did not perceive these problems to be related to differences in cultural backgrounds. These teachers, generally following prescribed middle-class curriculums, recognized to a degree their ineffectiveness with minority group children, but did not perceive or have available more appropriate alternatives.

Social-class related attitudes toward reading are explored in Mazurkiewicz' study (37) in which boys and their fathers from different social-cultural groups were asked to classify reading as a more or less masculine or feminine activity. The correlations, though low, were in the expected direction. A study by Roth (54) with adolescents explored the role of self-concept in reading improvement. In this study Roth achieved at least partial confirmation of his hypothesis that, if demands for reading improvement are viewed as a personal threat, the individual will reject the demand and maintain his self-concept. If, however, reading improvement methods are nonthreatening, the individual is able to respond to them, incorporating his new experiences and learning to accept himself as a student and reader.

More fundamental in their approach are the studies now in progress at the University of Chicago under Dr. Fred L. Strodbeck and at the Institute of Developmental Studies, Department of Psychiatry, New York Medical College, under Dr. Martin Deutsch. Preliminary mimeographed reports and newspaper accounts of these studies suggest that in each case the approach to language learning and teaching is centered on efforts to compensate for lower-class children's more limited practice in verbalizing their experiences and their lack of intimate verbal experiences with loving adults.

An experimental effort by Strodbeck to introduce slum area children in Chicago to reading as early as 4 years of age purportedly failed in its first trial because methods were geared initially to those used with children from middle-class homes. The second trial is designed to provide these children with the kinds of prereading experiences—being read to, alone, by an adult; playing word games, again with an adult. These are activities that many middle-class children normally experience in their homes, but that lower-class children lack.

In the research at the Institute for Developmental Studies, a variety of devices are employed to stimulate lower-class children of first- and fifth-grade age levels to verbalize their experiences. Children are given a toy clown whose nose lights up because he is happy when they talk. Role-playing experiences are provided for these children to initiate talking about what they have seen. A preliminary report of this study, quoted by Reisman, indicates that lower-class children are unexpectedly verbal in these spontaneous, fantasy- and action-oriented situations. Their responses, though more unstructured than those expected of middle-class children of their age, show considerable freedom and creativity in word associations.

Perhaps the most sustained research on the effect of relating the content of children's reading to their environmental background was that conducted in rural schools under the auspices of the University of Kentucky. This research reported in the University's Bureau of School Service Bulletin, March 1942, showed that the specially prepared reading materials, dealing with health and nutrition, apparently effected significant improvements not only in community living standards, but also in reading skills in the experimental schools. Comparable research on the long-range effects of special reading materials for underprivileged urban children is, unfortunately, not available.

It is obvious that research directly and even tangentially relevant to teaching English to our economically deprived and culturally different children leaves many of the most pressing questions unanswered. It does, however, provide a basis for the following tentative recommendations:

1. Since these children are in certain specific ways *deprived*, their total educational program and especially their programs in English must first of all provide special compensations. They need *more* of many things, such as those suggested below.

2. Their school and teachers need to help extend the world of these children with *more varied experiences* than their circumscribed lives afford. Field trips, which should include factories, terminals, new neighborhoods, as well as museums, concerts, and theatres, will provide some of the raw material for language arts activities.

3. They need *much more practice* in the many phases of language readiness that teachers take for granted among middle-class children. Here the possibilities of language laboratories and intensive practice of language patterns should be explored.

4. These children need additional practice at pre-first-grade levels or through supplementary instruction accompanying regular school work. Research on the relative merits of these two administrative arrangements is needed. Perhaps, because of the rapidly cumulative effect of initial language limitations, supplementary help should be given *before* these children have fallen behind grade level.

5. Perhaps the most important administrative help for these children is the provision of more teachers per student. The "class of 20" that has been proposed as a means of assuring each child more supportive adult

attention merits trial and evaluation. Experimentation with teacher aides, provided total class size is not too much augmented and intimate interpersonal relationships are not sacrificed, may be another means to this end.

6. The fact that these children may lack positive adult models, both to help them achieve the passage from childhood to manhood and womanhood and to suggest occupational choices to them, suggests that junior and senior high school teachers should provide ample opportunity for talking, writing, and reading about these matters. For these children the contribution of literature as a means of developing self-concepts is especially important.

On the other hand, since these children do have viable individual and cultural strengths, schools and teachers should plan methods and materials to build upon these strengths. The following recommendations and observations are pertinent in this context:

1. Administrative and teacher reliance on intelligence tests—even nonverbal and "culture-free" verbal tests—as a means of grouping children and predicting language potentialities should be seriously challenged.

2. Since these children appear to respond better to active experiences than to purely verbal assignments and to have much greater readiness and capacity for speaking than for reading, the principle of proceeding from experience to speaking to reading is critically important for them.

3. Special efforts need to be made to relate reading to the particular experiences of these children. Does this mean special, different reading materials for them? This is one of the questions on which research is needed. It is possible that some special reading texts, drawing upon their experience and environment, may be needed at the elementary level. However, such special materials should not further limit, stereotype, or segregate social class or racial groups.

4. At the secondary level there are sufficient examples provided by gifted teachers of English—though no research evidence—that lower-class children can read and profit from reading the "good" literature that is enjoyed by middle-class children also. The teacher who is able to tap the experiences and concerns of lower-class children, which sometimes come much closer to life's core than do the experiences of more protected and privileged children, may find them unexpectedly responsive to literature. It is probably advisable, with lower-class children, frequently to choose reading selections from modern literature in which character and theme as well as language are close to the reality these prematurely adult adolescents know.

5. In writing instruction English teachers might begin by capitalizing on the lower-class child's less stereotyped associations to words, and might accept unstructured, associative writing before emphasizing structured writing. Certainly writing assignments which depend on middle-class experiences—pets, hobbies, vacations—should be replaced by those that tap the experiences of another world.

6. Finally, English teachers and teachers generally should consider ways of building upon the social values and mores of lower-class children. Group loyalties and the lower-class ethic of reciprocity have been con-

structively exploited by the street corner worker. Perhaps these values and modes can be engaged by teachers to help these children help themselves to learn.

From such beginnings, supplemented by accelerated research, we may continue to enlarge the educational opportunities genuinely available to the millions of children in the grey areas of our inner cities. With increased understanding and determined effort we can come closer to Clinton's dream of a nation where no privileged orders interpose barriers between classes or limits to aspiration. If schools and teachers will heed what is already known and search for further knowledge, the environmentally deprived and culturally different need not remain the educationally underprivileged.

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# Language Ability in the Elementary School: Implications of Findings Pertaining to the Culturally Disadvantaged

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## Purposes of the Investigation

THE RESEARCH reported in this paper was a study of language used by children in the kindergarten and first 6 years of elementary school. The study was concerned with describing accurately their use and control of language, their effectiveness in communication, and the relationships among their oral, written, and reading uses of language. It was one part of a longer study covering the same subjects throughout the elementary and secondary school years. The study was funded, in part, by grants from the U.S. Office of Education, under the provisions of Public Law 531, 83d Congress.

## Design of the Research, A Brief Overview

This research was based on a developmental design with the hypotheses and methods subject to modification during the course of a continuing study. The subjects were in 1952 a representative group of 338 kindergarten children. At regular intervals over a period of 11 years, comparable samples of their language were collected. From this evidence significant features worthy of description and analysis were identified and studied. The samples of language—oral, written, reading—were drawn once a year from controlled situations identical for all subjects.

In addition to the larger representative group of subjects, two special subgroups were selected from the total sample. These two subgroups consisted of subjects representing extreme deviations from the mean of the total sample.

## The Sample

The 338 subjects used in this study were chosen to represent a stratified sample of a larger universe of children. The 11 kindergarten classes were matched with family backgrounds typical of the city of Oakland, Calif. Thus subjects included a range of family status from definitely poor economic circumstances in the industrial areas down by the Bay through the middle-class areas up to the more favored socioeconomic circumstances of the hill-top districts. The evidence on socioeconomic status for the subjects in this research places the median slightly below middle class.

However, stratification was not tied to one particular variable such as socioeconomic status. The choice of subjects also included representativeness on the bases of sex, racial background, and spread of intellectual ability. Care was taken to avoid any unique or unusual factor of selection. In other words, fairly general stratification variables were used, together with proportional allocation.

## Findings

For the Negro child with a southern background, using the verb *to be* appropriately proved to be 12 times as troublesome as for the northern Caucasian subjects. Confusion of present with past tense impressed one as another difficulty to be attacked in the middle grades as well as earlier. By noting the incidence of southern Negro's errors in relation to those of the northern Caucasian, one can locate those deviations that require the greatest help in schools with a number of Negro children similar to this group. For instance, the use of the nominative pronoun for the possessive (Mary took *she* book home) showed a larger difference between southern Negro and northern Caucasian than *hisself* for *himself*.

Analysis of the nonconventional statements of the total sample for all 7 years of this study showed subject-predicate agreement to be the major source of difficulty. That sensitivity to the conventions of standard English is related to skill in language was seen in the significant differences on conventional usage. The high group was significantly superior to the random group and the low group significantly below the random group. The results were significant at the 1 percent level; this finding occurred in various ways throughout the study.

Those subjects who proved to have the greatest power over language—by every measure that could be applied—were *the subjects who most frequently used language to express tentativeness.* Supposition, hypotheses, and conditional statements occurred much less frequently in the language of those subjects lacking skill in language. The low subgroup furnished only a few examples of this use of language; whereas, the high subgroup used language in this way from kindergarten through the sixth grade, employing such words as "perhaps" and "maybe" more often than did the subjects who had difficulty in expressing themselves. These most capable speakers often used such expressions as the following:

> It might be a gopher, but I'm not sure.
>
> That, I think, is in Africa.
>
> But maybe they don't have any dogs in Alaska.
>
> I'm not exactly sure where that is. It looks like it might be at school.
>
> That's white grass—unless there's snow or the sun is reflecting.

The child with less power over language appeared to be more dogmatic in his speech, was not often capable of seeing more than one alternative, and apparently summoned up all his linguistic energies merely to make a flat statement.

## Writing

Papers were rated on a five-point scale. The median rating for the high, random, and low groups for each of grades four, five, and six follows:

| | *High* | *Random* | *Low* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Grade four | Average | Average | Below average |
| Grade five | Average | Average | Below average |
| Grade six | Average | Average | Below average |

An examination of the subjects in grades four, five, and six, by socioeconomic level of students, showed the following median ratings on writing:

| *Socioeconomic category*[1] | *Median rating on writing* |
|---|---|
| I (High) | Average |
| II | Average |
| III | Average |
| IV | Below average |
| V | Below average |
| VI | Below average |
| VII (Low) | Below average |

## Coherence Through the Use of Subordinating Connectives

The accurate use of subordinating connectives such as *although*, *because*, and *unless* has been shown to develop with age. Watts[2] devised a multiple-choice test with items such as the following:

He loves his mother, although—
- a. she loves him.
- b. she is unkind to him.
- c. she is kind.
- d. he does not.

Beginning in grade five, this Watts Test of Subordinating Connectives was administered and the results obtained for the high, low, and random groups. The socioeconomic status of the total group of subjects was of interest. Examining the median scores and the range of scores by socioeconomic level, we obtained these clear trends: The highest and lowest socioeconomic groups overlapped by only a few points, and the median of the highest group was almost double that of the lowest group. Notable also was the steady decrease in median as one read down the socioeconomic scale. In summary, this sample showed an increasing use of subordinating connectors with higher chronological age, mental ability, and socioeconomic status.

## Conclusions

### Structural Patterns

- The low group used many more oral partial expressions—sentence patterns that were incomplete—than the high group.
- The group proficient in language employed the linking verb sentence pattern to a greater extent than did the low group.

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[1] Minnesota occupational scale.

[2] A. F. Watts, *The Language and Mental Development of Children*. New York: D.C. Heath and Company, 1948, p. 82–4, 302–5.

- Except for the linking verb pattern and the use of partials, the differences in structural patterns used by the two groups tended to be small. This similarity in use of patterns was considered to be an important finding of this study, especially when considered in relation to the findings which immediately follow.

## Elements Within the Structural Patterns

- Although differences in structural patterns were not notable—with the exception of partials and linking verbs—very important differences did show up in the dexterity with which subjects used elements *within these structures.* The nominals, whether in subject or object position, and the movable elements showed marked differences when low and high groups were compared. This held true consistently for any syntactical nominal structure. It was assumed from this that predication, when it was studied, would show similar marked differences. This finding on the elements of structural patterns was considered to be another important finding of this study and should be considered in relation to the findings on the similarity of structural patterns. *Not pattern but what was done to achieve flexibility within the pattern* proved to be a measure of effectiveness and control of language at this level of language development.

- In the movable elements of sentence patterns, the high group consistently showed a greater repertoire of clauses and multiples (movables within movables).

- For subject nominals, the low group depended almost exclusively on nouns and pronouns. The high group used noun clauses, infinitives, and verbals.

- For nominals used as complements, both groups used nouns and pronouns with the same frequency, but the high group invaribly exceeded the low group in the use of infinitives and clauses.

## Conventional Usage and Grammar

- Lack of agreement between subject and predicate proved to be the major difficulty in the use of verbs. The trends in this study showed that the difficulty increased for Negro boys in grades one through three and decreased for Negro girls, provided that these Negro children came from homes using a southern Negro dialect.

- For Negro subjects with southern background, using the verb *to be* appropriately proved to be 12 times as troublesome as for northern Caucasian subjects.

### Tentative Thinking Through the Use of Provisional and Conditional Statements

- Those subjects most proficient with language were the ones who most frequently used language to express tentativeness. Supposition, hypothesis, and conditional statements occurred much less frequently in the spoken language of those lacking skill in language.

### Reading and Writing

- Writing ability was related to socioeconomic position. Those who were in the four lowest socioeconomic categories rated below average in writing, and those who were in the highest three categories rated average in writing.

### Coherence Through the Use of Subordination

- On an index of subordination, the high group used this grammatical complexity to a greater extent than the random and low groups. Their precedence over the other groups was consistent throughout all 7 years of the study.

- Both the index of subordination and the transformational analysis showed complexity of grammatical structure to be associated not only with chronological age but also with proficiency in language and very likely with socioeconomic status.

### Coherence Through the Use of Subordinating Connectives

- There was an increasing use of subordinating connectives, increasing with chronological age, mental ability, language ability, and socioeconomic status.

### Interrelationships Among the Language Arts

- In this study, reading, writing, listening, and oral language showed a positive relationship.

The superiority of the high group in handling oral signals effectively—their skill at using pitch, stress, and pause—combined with their relative freedom from using partial structural patterns was im-

**pressive. It would be difficult not to conclude that instruction could yet do more that it has with oral language. Many pupils who lacked skill in using the oral language would have difficulty in mastering the written tradition. Competence in the spoken language appeared to be a base for competence in writing and reading. Modern equipment for recording and studying the spoken word makes possible marked advances in such instruction.**

# A Research Proposal To Develop the Language Skills of Children With Poor Backgrounds

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THE SEARCH to discover new approaches that will ensure greater success in developing the language skills of children with poor backgrounds who enter school with less language proficiency than they need to do well in present programs is the guiding question that the present study proposes to pursue.

## Setting for and General Nature of the Study

The study is part of a larger undertaking, the Talent Development Project, being sponsored by the Center for School Experimentation of the College of Education, The Ohio State University. The project is concerned with exploring a variety of ways by which the general disability of children from deprived backgrounds can be attacked. (1)* It involves 20 pilot elementary schools, 5 in each of 4 Ohio school systems—Akron, Cincinnati, Dayton, and Toledo—and is scheduled to run from 1961 to 1966. All the schools have been selected because they enroll children from culturally deprived or different backgrounds. Twelve of the schools will be available for the language development study.

The idea behind the present proposal is that more conscious attention to the language deficiencies of such children at the time of their school entry will provide some of the tools and equipment needed if these children are to transcend their cultural limitations. Many of them now come to school with too little ability to use the English language.

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* Numbers in parentheses are keyed to references in the Bibliography at the end of this article.

In the past, underdevelopment in language, as in most aspects of "readiness," has been attributed to lower intelligence, immaturity in growth and development, or general inexperience. For children who did not respond promptly to our program for any of these reasons, we have found the passage of time to be our best partner. Given time enough and continued "readiness" activities, slow developers would finally reach a point where they could profitably enter upon our regular program.

Now, however, we are beginning to question whether language development for all such children need simply wait upon time. With the help of insights from many fields, we are reassessing our concept of readiness in this area. The present statement defines three kinds of underdeveloped language that we may need to learn more about as we try to improve the program of experiences for children from restricted backgrounds.

## Kinds of Language Underdevelopment

Some children may be marked by a severe kind of verbal destitution beyond anything that has ordinarily been identified as unreadiness. Some may have full language development of a kind but not the kind most valued by the school. Still others may lack conceptualization of experience in some of the areas we expect school beginners to know about, and may thus appear to be suffering from language underdevelopment. These are the three kinds of underdevelopment to be reviewed in this section.

### True Verbal Destitution

Some children may come to school with such a lack of language experience of any kind that they can be said to be victims of "verbal destitution." (2) Their opportunities for using language may have been so circumscribed that they truly have less language than other children.

This kind of deprivation is being widely studied in the field of mental retardation. Kirk (3) based his study of the early education of the mentally retarded on the assumption that a richer language environment for young children as provided by the multiplication of older speakers in an institutional situation would advance not only language but also intellectual functioning.

The influence of institutionalization on language development of subnormal children has been studied by several other recent investigators. In studying the vocabulary definitions of 60 in-patients in a state school for mental defectives, Badt (4) found a significant inverse correlation between the length of institutionalization and the ability to abstract. In a comparison of the size of vocabulary possessed by normal children and by 80 patients in an English institution for the severely subnormal, Mein and O'Connor (5) found that the subnormals had more words in common but many fewer unique to themselves. They concluded that the routines of a hospital or institution limit "the influence of life experience in the acquisition of new words." Two studies by Lyle, also done in England, deal with differences in the size of vocabulary possessed by institutionalized and day-school subnormals (6) and with the gains in an experimental school program which emphasized a "context of real life situations rather than formal 'lessons.'" (7).

A study of the effect of prolonged hospitalization on the language development of 100 normal older children brought Haggerty (8) to the conclusion that much the same kind of effects reported for other institutionalized persons was true there. The oral language of these seventh-grade students resembled that of younger children and also of schizophrenics.

Some studies have dealt with direct comparisons of the language of normal children of different class origins. Typical is one reported by Templin (9) in which 480 children, from ages 3 to 8, were compared on articulation, sound discrimination, vocabulary, language complexity, and length of sentence. In 230 possible comparisons, the lower socioeconomic group was found to be higher in only 13 instances. Differences were particularly notable in articulation, grammatical complexity, and vocabulary among school children and in length of sentences among preschool children. The differences in terms of socioeconomic class were greater than those found for sex or intelligence. Templin suggests the need for "more specific dimensions of environmental stimulation" if such studies are to be made more meaningful.

If we were to try to do more for those children who come to us truly destitute in language, where would we begin?

## Full but Nonstandard Language Development

Some children may come to school with highly developed language of a kind that is not fully acceptable. They may be able to make themselves understood, but their speech may be so full of oddities and "errors," from the viewpoint of standard English, that we feel their needs for further language development to be very great.

Perhaps these are regional differences in part. With an increase in mobility, as Tomlinson (10) points out, one may expect to find many more such differences in the average classroom. If one can think of them in this way, regional differences may become a source of enrichment for the language of all children. As "interesting variations in pronunciation and usage," such differences can be studied directly from the language experience of a group of "natives" and "migrants" or, if such a rich resource is lacking, from the regional literature that may help to sensitize children to other ways of speaking and new kinds of expressions that may be both respected and valued.

Or perhaps we are dealing with nonstandard language. Regional differences can themselves be thought of as falling into standard and nonstandard classifications. Clubb (11) identifies three regional dialects—New England, southern, and other—in which he sees the presence of both standard and nonstandard spoken English. His suggestion is that, for children who come to school with nonstandard speech, standard English should be taught as if it were a foreign language. The use of pattern practice drills, widely employed today in the audiolingual approach to learning another language, should be useful here, he believes.

Nonstandard language may also be thought of as lower-class English. Cohn (12) proposes that lower-class English be accepted as a separate "dialect" in relationship to standard English, and advises the teaching of the latter as a second or "alien tongue" to those children who need it while at the same time assuming a "morally neutral" attitude toward the dialect. With its "more elaborate syntax," standard English is "far superior to lower-class English for purely intellectual purposes." It makes possible finer distinctions and greater exactness, and also is the vehicle for the transmission of our heritage. However, lower-class English has its uses, too. It is the medium of much personal or intimate communication as used by novelists and also by others than those of lower-class origin. Children who know standard English to start with, Cohn proposes, might be helped to learn to respect lower-class English as a dialect with great power to express emotions.

If we want to do more for children who really do have fully developed language of regional, nonstandard, or dialectal varieties, what differences might we make in our primary program?

## Unconceptualized Experience and Undeveloped Language

Some children may come to school with well-developed language in some but not all of the usual areas. In certain aspects of experience valued by the school, they may have had no occasion to verbalize meanings and, consequently, may appear to be impoverished in their language.

This kind of impoverishment is well illustrated by the remarks of the first manager of heavyweight champion Sonny Liston. Born on an Arkansas cotton farm, Liston had a chance to go to school only when it rained. Later, with his wife's help, he learned to "read the streets." But Monroe Harrison, his first manager, points out that in dealing with his former protege, "You got to talk to him about what he talks about. Otherwise he's got no conversation. When you go with him to a function, don't leave him out there in the fourth dimension with all those diplomats." (13)

In our approach to underdeveloped language, we are dealing most directly with the union of concept and language development proposed by Russell (14) as leading to new insights about the dimensions of children's "meaning" vocabularies. The likelihood that "word-ideas" and "meaning-ideas" are mostly acquired simultaneously had been pointed out over 50 years earlier by O'Shea (15) who spoke of the two as tending to "coalesce" and who proposed as a "universal" principle of "oral expression" that . . .

> a man is effective linguistically in those situations, and those only, in which he has often been placed, and in reaction upon which he has been constantly urged, by force of circumstances, to express himself readily and to the point.

O'Shea also noted the importance of interaction with others as the arena for language development. As an example, he referred to one of the children on whom his study is based as finding her playmates most important in this process. With them . . .

> the new interests coming into her life from time to time are worked over linguistically in a great variety of ways, and with a spirit and skill that she does not exhibit so markedly at other times.

These other times include her school, where "careful observers" found that "pupils are put into seats, and commanded to keep quiet."

But until Russell redefined the need for joining the vocabulary studies derived from educational and child development with those of concept development in psychology, the intervening years were marked by a narrowed or an incomplete concern on the one hand with counting and normative studies and on the other with an analysis of thinking processes unrelated to language as such.

The need for a new concern about the conceptualization as well as the verbalization of children from underprivileged backgrounds is well expressed by Ethel Tomlinson, a first-grade teacher of Saginaw, Michigan, who, after pointing out that the advice on language growth usually confines itself to the value of providing and discussing group experiences, refers to her largely in-migrant group. Most of these children have had plenty of "experience," more than most middle-class children:

> Of the nine children born in Michigan, only four had lived all their life in the town they were born in, without even a trip "down South." They have lived in various cities, most on cotton farms or in Texas in "an old house with owls upstairs where we pick tomatoes." As one child put it, "We got all the kinds of people there is in here but Chinese and Eskimos." Any middle-class child with these experiences would have a large vocabulary. (16)

The culturally different children that Mrs. Tomlinson was dealing with lacked interest in many of the words with which she confronted them. They had had experience with skates and cows and colors, but many found "naming" them hard work.

Another phase of this approach that may deserve study is the extent to which children who lack acceptable conceptualization may hesitate to share what they do have. One report of children's willingness to communicate their feelings and concerns indicates that some children who are quite open in revealing attitudes towards such adults as teachers and counselors are highly reticent about their families. The investigators conclude "that an attitude's accessibility is an inverse function of its perceived unacceptability." (17) Possibly such children not only lack conceptualization in many of the areas in which we expect it but are silent about areas in which they may have high degrees of conceptualization, such as owls in the attic and tomato picking, because they fear that such knowledge will be disvalued.

Or perhaps silence sometimes comes simply from sensing, incorrectly in many cases, the possible irrelevance of prior or current out-of-school learnings. The first-grade student whose family had come to Cincinnati from the hills across the river was surprised when his teacher talked about fertilizing her roses. "Why, Mrs. Dean," he exclaimed, "I didn't know you knew about manure!" As Ozmon (18) reiterates, the child from a "deprived" background may be widely experienced in many ways but finds little or nothing in the reading texts that relates to the world as he knows it. "Not only do these children whom he reads about not fight, as all his playmates do—but they don't even argue!"

If we find that some of our children who seem to lack language are really not immature in experience as such but simply unpracticed in dealing with all their experience verbally, what difference may this make in our approach to language development in the primary program?

## Defining More Fully Our Field of Concern

**While all three kinds of language underdevelopment need study, the present investigation centers on the third, the relationship between unconceptualized experience and undeveloped language.**

**Of course, the language problem should not be over-simplified, but recent findings from a variety of fields, such as linguistics, psychology, and sociology, (19, 20, 21, 22) suggest that the kind of language underdevelopment that results from lack of experience and lack of interaction with fully languaged adults can yield to deliberate teaching. Such a position may be defined more fully as follows:**

***Language is a product of the process of conceptualization or thinking things out.*** **The young child learns his language through imitation and a continuous testing out of what he thinks he knows. He can learn only those words and ways of dealing with experience that words represent and which he hears.**

***One learns with his native language many ways of dealing with experience that are culturally defined.*** **The child incorporates in the language he learns certain kinds of discriminations that represent the qualities, objects, and processes that are deemed to have importance.**

***Groups in a population may differ in the variety and complexity of their frameworks for conceptualization, and these differences are reflected in their language.*** **The young child learns to think with whatever language he learns from those around him. Naming, comparing, defining, judging, and generalizing will all necessarily be done within whatever limits exist in the minds and vocabularies of his older associates.**

***Children brought up in a disadvantaged or different group may be more handicapped than other children by having less language to think with in approaching school-sponsored experiences.*** **A child may be able to make highly differentiated verbal responses to some aspects of his experience that are highly valued by his family (such as types of crops, values of different fertilizers, and degrees of kinship) but may lack the framework for thinking and the words to use in dealing with more remote or "less important" matters.**

**If these statements are valid, what may they mean to us in working to develop more fully the language of children from culturally deprived or different backgrounds?**

## Some Possible Phases of the Study

**In pursuit of answers to this question, we should explore the following four approaches:**

## Phase I: Comparative Study of the Language of School Beginners

**Can we test the supposed differences between children from good and poor backgrounds in terms of presence or relative absence of framework for handling experience?**

**By collecting samples of spoken responses to the same stimuli (for example, the readiness picture charts accompanying a science series for kindergarteners), it should be possible to analyze the framework of conceptualization brought to the stimuli by children of different backgrounds.**

## Phase II: Achievement of Focus by Interdisciplinary Definition of the Problem

**The major activity of this phase would be the holding of a seminar at which scholars from linguistics, cultural anthropology, child development, psychology, sociology, and language arts would bring their viewpoints into focus on the problem of developing language for culturally deprived children. In addition, several persons representing language arts education and early childhood and elementary education would be involved to help assess the implications for action.**

**From this seminar should come a series of hypotheses for the affiliated schools to test as described in phase III. The seminar participants would be further involved as consultants in phases III and IV.**

## Phase III: Exploration of Program Implications with Field Affiliates

**The third phase of the study of language development would be centered on developing with the kindergarten and primary teachers (plus assigned principals and supervisors) in each of the 12 schools the program implications of the hypotheses that are developed during phases I and II. The intention would be to formulate a program of new practices to test the hypotheses in action.**

**These practices might be developed from exploring such lines as these:**

**1. *Reexamining our ideas and practices in language development.* We may be impeding language use and growth by engaging in practices that are premature, such as expecting children to speak in error-free fashion, especially children whose habitual**

language happens to be based on substandard structures. In some instances, we may be overly formal in insisting, for example, on children's always responding in complete sentences whether the questions or occasions demand full expression or not. We may be less than fully aware, in our busy day, of all the opportunities there are for language development and may plan instead for the narrower emphasis that comes on focusing our major attention on "sharing" or "telling" times.

2. *Making sure that we support all occasions for conceptualizing.* We may wish to become better aware of the kinds of thinking processes that could be guided deliberately toward the development of more closely discriminated language. We might really make an effort to use to the fullest every opportunity that could help children learn to conceptualize and thus "add vocabulary" to their present fund. These might be some of the conceptualizing and verbalizing activities we could more intentionally sponsor: comparing, contrasting, defining, describing, differentiating, extending, generalizing, guessing (hypothesizing), imagining, modifying, relating, revising, symbolizing, and testing.

If such an approach seems too academic, we might begin to be aware of the many ways we could do more with sense impressions toward developing a broader verbal base for talking about touching, testing, smelling, seeing, and hearing experiences and for responding expressively to these experiences in all the many ways we value.

3. *Developing specialized vocabularies.* We have worked out in considerable detail the language of number readiness—volume and size, distance, location, and the like. We seize every opportunity in the experience of school beginners to help them gain meanings attached to *more* and *less*, *near* and *far*, *up* and *down*, and *over* and *under*. Could we think out similarly the language of some other basic areas of experience? In which aspects of experience do children from poor backgrounds need most help in learning to make greater distinctions: color, texture, descriptive terms generally, names for things, or what?

## Phase IV: Installation and Testing of an Experimental Program

The prior phases complete the task set in this proposal. However, at their completion, the program developed during phase III would be tested out in similar schools that have not been involved in the study, with appropriate matched experimental and control groups. Devices for evaluation discovered or developed during the preceding phases would be used to collect the needed data for comparative study.

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# Improving Language Skills

# A Realistic Writing Program for Culturally Diverse Youth

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**TWO CENTURIES ago, before anyone dreamed of the political upheavals in America and France, Thomas Gray wrote a poem profoundly revolutionary. As he wandered among the stones of the country churchyard, he said to himself, "Why did no great man come from this village? Why was there no John Milton, no John Hampden, no Oliver Cromwell?" Gray's revolutionary answer to his own questions appears in the key stanza of his poem "Elegy Written in a Country Church-Yard":**

> **But knowledge to their eyes her ample page**
> **Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll;**
> **Chill penury repressed their noble rage,**
> **And froze the genial current of the soul.**

**Even much later in history when every town had not only a free elementary school but a free high school as well, this notion of Gray's appeared to be romantic nonsense. Poverty and ignorance indeed! In the minds of conservative thinkers it was not poverty and ignorance that barred the way to talent and great achievement; it was genetic limitation. Was not every man's destiny determined at his birth? It was nature, not environment, that made him a great man. But as early as 1634, America had set a revolutionary precedent that was to upset this pattern of thinking: Our forefathers in New England established free public schools, the essence of which was, "Every child can learn, and no one knows how much." In the ideal classroom we have an explosive force that breaks through all genetic limitations.**

**I speak particularly now of learning to write in a classroom of children of mixed backgrounds, a classroom still close to poverty, bound by the limitations of the parents. Can we convince each student in this class that he can learn to read and write well, notwithstanding**

any genetic lack of intelligence? We are gradually seeing that the release of energy in the adolescent toward a specific academic goal is a far greater factor in his success than any genetic endowment. The experience in New York City of Junior High School 43 alone shows how explosive is our power to help children move on to college. Most of the graduates of J.H.S. 43 attend George Washington High School. Now "the dropout rate of . . . students attending George Washington High School has been cut in half. . . . The percentage of these graduates eligible for college has leaped from about 9 percent to 36 percent. IQ scores . . . have risen sharply."[1]

When a boy or girl in a mixed classroom sees that he has a chance, sees that the teacher believes in him, sees that the teacher really means it when he says, "I am here to prove to you that you can write," something happens to that boy. When a teacher takes him to a Shakespearean play in Central Park, when a teacher spends 15 or 20 minutes writing helpful comments on his theme, when a teacher holds up his paper in class, even a single sentence, as an achievement any college teacher would be proud of, something happens to that boy: a release of energy, which in decades past we have come to think of as coming only from the inherently gifted child. We are seeing more clearly every year that this assumption of inherent gifts is more illusion than reality. Every child is gifted, depending upon the extent to which his energy is released in intellectual directions: learning to write, learning to read, learning to work mathematical problems.

This energy is released in a deprived youth only when he sees that those opportunities which he thought were open only to the "bright kids" are now opening to him. Maybe his father was born in Puerto Rico and still speaks hardly a word of English. Maybe his mother was born in Mexico and never even learned to read and write. A gifted teacher can still prove to that child that he can read, that he can write, that he can go on to college. It is not the IQ that stands in his way; it is the indifference of society to the conditions that have hitherto held him back. His enemy is not his IQ, but a classroom of 35 or 40 as opposed to a classroom of 20. His enemy is not his IQ, but a teacher who fails to show week after week that this child is in a unique way her teacher and the teacher of every other child in the class. The way this child becomes a teacher is by writing well, and the teacher is there to prove that he can write well.

The first step in a writing program for the future is to keep the class of mixed youngsters to 20. Twenty-five are too many. Often even 22 are too many. It depends on the teacher, but let us say, as a rule of thumb, that the smaller the class, the friendlier its members are likely to be to each other. A loving, expectant classroom of peers and teacher is indispensable to the flowering of intelligence. The smaller the class, the more attention the teacher can give to each student, the more time she can spend on each theme. Not only must we keep the class to 20, but we must not give the teacher more than four of these classes, or a total of 80 students. She has to live with them, take them to plays, take them to museums. She has to visit their home. She has to get their parents into the classroom. She has to take these youngsters to various colleges. She has to take them to visit courts and jails. She must take them to Emerson's house and Hawthorne's Old Manse at Concord, Jefferson's Monticello, the Lincoln Memorial—all the time proving to them that they can mint fresh and memorable images of moments and places.

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[1] Arthur D. Morse, *Schools of Tomorrow*. New York: Doubleday and Company, 1960, p. 46.

Given this ideal situation, a teacher can be successful, not only proving to the youngsters that they can write, but also proving to them that they can read the best books, that they can go on to college, that they can "amount to something" in the great American tradition. Each one of us has had this experience. Somewhere, maybe in the 6th, 7th, or the 10th grade, we had such a teacher. Why did we respond? Was it because we had a promising IQ? Did anyone ever say about you, as many people have said about me, "I didn't think he had it in him?" Well, America is a country which proves all such predictions fallacious and misleading. Every boy "has it in him" if we release that inexhaustible energy in the adolescent years in the direction of books and ideas and preparation for college.

The first step the English teacher can take toward this end is to make a weekly writing assignment. The more time that is spent on this assignment, the better the result. It has to be a topic on which everyone in the class can write with deep feeling. Unless the assignment calls forth deep feeling, none of that precious energy will go into it. Only when great energy is released does the student surpass himself. Only then can we prove to him that he can write.

The first question, then, is, "What topic will appeal to everybody in the class?" Let us say we choose an assignment such as *proud words*. Everyone speaks proud words. You remember Carl Sandburg's poem on this topic, which we read to the class:

> Look out how you use proud words.
> When you let proud words go, it is not easy to call them back.
> They wear long boots; they walk off proud; they can't hear you calling—
> Look out how you use proud words.

The most important motivation is not, however, a poem by a great writer, but a theme by one of our own students from the year before or a theme written, perhaps, by the teacher himself in preparation for this assignment—a theme about a moment in his own early life. Perhaps for this special assignment he writes a theme like this one:

### My Brother Fred

One July morning several years ago, when we lived along a West Virginia creek, I used proud words I couldn't call back. I was sitting on the back porch, getting ready to go trout fishing, when my little brother Fred came out and sat down on the steps. He was about 8 years old, a chubby yellow-haired boy with big blue eyes. When he looked up at me with a pleading look, I knew what he was going to say. He was always asking to go with me somewhere. I guess I was angry at him because he couldn't climb along the creek banks as fast as I. So I blurted out, "No, you can't go, and don't ask me again." He sort of crumpled up and began to sniffle. Then without a word he walked down the steps and across the yard, his head down and the sunlight splashing over his yellow hair. All day I felt jumpy inside and didn't enjoy the fishing. At supper that evening, Fred just looked away when I sat down, and I didn't eat much trout. But I couldn't ask him to forgive me, and I couldn't call back my proud words.

*Joe Breckinridge*

In such an assignment one of our purposes is to help the class to talk. The more the class talks following the reading of themes, the more likely the students are to reach deep into their own feelings and experiences when they begin to write. In order to carry on such a discussion, the teacher must from the first day create a friendly classroom. If this is not done, the writing program somehow goes awry. We do not yet know the relation of love between the teacher and class and love among fellow students to the release of intelligence. But no underprivileged boy or girl learns to write exceptionally well from a teacher who does not respect him and look upon him with an eye of faith and affection.

As the writing assignments continue week after week, the students come to see each other's problems. They write about fathers and mothers, they write about moments of decision, they write about moments of love and hate. They write about favorite books and favorite movies. They write about moments of religious faith. One thing the teacher can do is to ask the student to write down anonymously what he considers his most important problems. Here is a sampling of problems described anonymously in various classrooms:

How can I keep from quarreling with my mother?

Why do parents object because a boy is not of my religion?

How can a girl be popular with boys without making the boys think she's wild?

I am afraid to face the world. All of a sudden I have become very self-conscious, and I don't know why.

What is the best way of finding out what job I'm best fitted for?

The mere self-listing of student problems shows the appalling gap that exists between the invitations to write and speak in the English class and the problem realities of each individual student. Each student has a right to expect that he can write or speak about some deep realities of his life for this reason: Until he describes the conflicts that torture him and drain his emotional energy, he has not realized the writing power and talent of which he is capable.

When Emerson said, "Every man is eloquent once in his life," he was too restrictive of man's creative energies. Were he alive today, he might well change his dictum to read: "Every man is eloquent each time he speaks from a deep cavern of himself as if to his only trusted friend." Until English teachers in America assume, then, a responsibility for finding out the deep-running problems, fears, and obstacles of each student and encourage him to express his feelings as freely as he can about each one, the student cannot find the natural level of his writing power nor make the first crucial step toward the mature answers to the questions that rack his brain and plague his sleepless hours.

Let us say we are teaching a 10th-grade class of mixed backgrounds. Most of the students in the class do not expect to go on to college. We have been working to convince them they can go on, but we have several obstacles. One is the IQ record in the principal's office. Another is the poor grades the class has had in the past. Another, of course, is the temptation of taking a job. Most of our students need spending money, especially the boys. Now 15 or 16, they want to take their girls to movies, but their fathers and mothers are poor. How can we keep them in school? How can we even present the dropout problem? One way to present the dropout problem is to assign a theme on this topic. We never compel a class to write on the topic we assign. We want each one to write on the topic that draws on the deepest well of his emotional energy. This is the dynamo that provides the power by which he works and thinks. The deepest feelings call forth the most eloquent language. Let us read, then, to the class a theme like the following:

### Last Night After Supper

Last night after supper my Dad and I sat in the living room of our railroad apartment, which overlooks the Allegheny River here in Pittsburgh. In the October dusk the street lights were blinking on. From far off came the moan of a fog horn: a coal barge chugging upriver. My Dad has a blast furnace job at J&L Steel Corporation. He doesn't work long hours, but it's very heavy labor, and his paycheck is never enough to take care of a family of five. Suddenly my Dad said to me, "Son, in 1 month you'll be 16. What are you going to do?" I look at Dad's thick graying hair and warm brown eyes, wide with concern for me, his oldest son. I knew what he meant. He didn't want me to drop out of school.

Well, I don't want to drop out either, but I know what Dad is up against. His paycheck is $75 a week. It sounds big, but it isn't enough. I make about $10 a week delivering groceries after school. My boss, Mr. O'Brien, says he'll give me a full-time job at $40 a week any time I want it. I hate to ask Dad for money. I need money every week for lunches, for carfare, for an evening at the movies with my friends. I'm good in math, and my math teacher wants me to stay on in school and go to college. But how can I go to college? I'm not good enough to get a scholarship, and Dad can't possibly send me.

All these thoughts went through my mind as I sat there in the living room, Dad looking out at the river and back at me again. I said to him, "Well, Dad, I know you don't want me to quit, but I think it's time I helped myself, and help the family a little bit, too. It won't be long before Joe will need spending money the way I do now."

Then I saw the hurt look in Dad's eyes, and I said, "But I'll talk it over with Mr. Trembly. Y'know, he's my math teacher. I'll see what he says." But I knew even at that moment, and I think Dad knew, too, that I just had to drop out.

*George Bellcheck*

Such a theme brings not only a vital class discussion; it may also bring in its wake several breakthroughs to superior achievement in the same class. This is the event we hope for most: a theme that sets off chain explosions in self-expression.

The more deeply they feel, the more eloquently they write. The more eloquently they write, the more vital to them becomes *the concern for correctness.* When a boy or girl struggles desperately to express his deepest thoughts, then he has the most valid reason of his life to punctuate and spell and write with clarity and elegance. At that time he has the greatest need also to make his reader see, touch, smell, taste, and hear just as he did at a critical moment of his life.

No assignment is more of a challenge than an autobiography, but you and I need to be dogmatic and restrictive, not in subject matter but in ways and means. We need to say, "Limit the topic of your autobiography. Write about you and one girl, you and your father, you and your friend. Write about you in one summer, your experiences in one room or one school, your experiences in one day or night: 5 moments of experience." We illustrate the structure of an autobiography to show the introductory paragraph, five paragraphs describing five moments, and the concluding paragraph this way:

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Introduction | Moment 1 | Moment 2 | Moment 3 | Moment 4 | Moment 5 | Conclusion |

As in other assignments, we read to the class autobiographies or portions of autobiographies such as the following:

## Autobiography

**I squirm deeper into my seat as the bus races through the rain-soaked August night, its lights bouncing from the filmed highway and jutting into the mist drifting from the black Jersey swamps. I'm leaving behind a part of myself, a part that I'll never get back again. The asphalt ribbon is broken by the flaring neon mosaic of passing roadhouses and drive-ins, and as these patterns of light flash past me I wonder if that's all a man is: a series of sections scattered through the world with only memories to pull the threads together. Threads. Threads twining through time; threads of love, truth, and aloneness; the threads of one's self—wrapped by the elusive thread of dreams.**

**This is the last run from Washington to New York; the bus is almost empty. A few passengers occupy the red-covered seats; their heads roll against the chairbacks and nod with the lurching of the darkened bus. My leg jostles the seabag propped alongside me, leaving a smudge on my starched uniform. I move my hand slowly toward my knee, then stop and lean back in the seat. Why should I bother? Who's going to chew me out? I've got my discharge from the Navy; there's no need to worry about a clean uniform any more . . . no need at all . . . I'm free. I'm going home. I should be happy—that's for sure.**

**But free for what?**

**A tired melancholy fills me as I rest my head on the cool window glass.**

***Charles Bryan***

The wise teacher prefers the term "autobiographical writing" to the term "creative writing." Autobiographical writing is the only democratic art capable of achievement in the schools at large. The time will come when we shall ask each citizen, young or old, to speak an autobiography for the education of future Americans, a record transmitted to posterity, that our descendants might hear not only our words, our life stories, but also our voices. We cherish for each child the "relief of utterance," the "dropping of the stones of memory into the pool of language." We believe in the search for the child's unique vision, in fragments coined in language every other child can understand. We believe in the comparison of aspirations, such as that of Milton, who wanted to leave "something so written to aftertimes, that they should not willingly let it die." We believe that there is no child, no man or woman who is not disabled, no one who has not suffered a unique bitterness and a unique sorrow. We believe in the plasticity of the child and the man to recoil from bitterness and sorrow into healing and hope. We believe that one way to health in the life of each boy and girl is to write about himself, his unique moments of joy, love, and frustration. The good English teacher is one who draws forth, week by week and month by month, stories that reveal to each member of the class a unique and unforgettable personality that he wishes to cherish the rest of his life.

What America needs is a searching, comprehensive program of writing that reveals to the student the unique dignity of his own experiences and the unique coloring of his personality; a program that helps the student identify some of his main dilemmas and the words he needs most urgently to define in years to come; a program that links writing realistically to appreciation of literature. For the teacher a program is needed that brings immense rewards in professional growth and insight, justifying her belief in the still untallied capacity for talent and achievement in American boys and girls.

In the writing program which I have described, the most important language tool is sensory language. The use of sights and sounds, colors and smells, images of touch is particularly vital in the description of a single moment of action.

We believe, then, in the magic of the child's plasticity, the most precious genetic ingredient of all. I like that statement in John Pfeiffer's wonderful book, *The Human Brain*, "Man is not anything except teachable." We believe that the habit of original thought can be engendered in the classroom, an expectancy of originality in one's fellow pupils. We believe that love in the classroom is indispensable to the flowering of intelligence, love not only between teacher and class, but also between student and student. We believe in the daily record of life in sensory language, a record that persists day after day and week after week until the boy and girl see all life anew. As Emerson wrote, "No man ever forgot the visitations of that power to his heart which created all things new; which was the dawn in him of music, poetry, and art." Perhaps you remember that wonderful passage from *The Brothers Karamazov*, "Precious memories may remain even of a bad home, if the heart can learn to know what is precious." We believe in a continuous record of precious memories of home life.

We believe that the student's own record of his life is the best introduction to the incandescent moments of great books. We are not content, and the student is not content, with a writing program that touches only his superficial life. We believe in a writing program that grapples relentlessly and lovingly with the deepest dilemmas of the student's experience, those dilemmas that teach him to be a better son, a better brother, a better friend and neighbor. The teacher of writing is a liberator, a miner of greatness. As described in Emerson's lines, "We are now men, and must accept in the highest mind the same transcendent destiny, not minors or invalids lying in a protected corner, not cowards fleeing before the revolution, but guides, redeemers, benefactors, obeying the Almighty effort and advancing upon chaos and the dark."

# Give Him a Book That Hits Him Where He Lives

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**CULTURALLY, he is bounded on the north by comic books, on the south by the pool parlor, on the east by the racing form, on the west by neighborhood small talk. Born into a home at cultural ebb tide, often raised midst turmoil and trauma, living in an intellectual ghetto, he sits in my classroom—annoyed to the point of hostility. I have asked him to read a book—any book—for a first report of the term.**

**The "he" I mean is no figment of my imagination. He is Barry Saltz, a 16-year-old future butcher of America (one of many such in my classroom); a present reluctant reader (one of many such in my classroom). Despite his 20/20 vision, it dismays him not an iota that he has never read a book cover to cover in all his 16 years, that he has never spent a rainy afternoon browsing in the library.**

**Scan the printed page? Not he!**

**I search my brain for a *book* that may appeal. "How about *Questions Boys Ask*,"[1] I recommend ever so naively, as I brandish a copy I own.**

**"Naaah. . . ."**

**I try sports, hobbies, deep-sea fishing—everything from prehistoric man of 5 million years ago to the stars millions of light years away. But I get a look that warns me—"Mister, you're wasting your time."**

**I am beginning to lose heart when one day it happens! I find the link I need to help move Barry Saltz from the desert island of ignorance about books he has for so long inhabited to the mainland of written words and ideas. It is a tiny link—no bigger than the cluster of warts on Barry's index finger.**

**Those warts really worry Barry, butcher-to-be, because as he put it,**

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[1] **David W. Armstrong. *Questions Boys Ask.* New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1955.**

"They're gonna drive away my customers." So I ask him one day, "Why don't you get rid of them?" and learn, to my surprise, that he has an *idée fixé* about warts. They come from touching frogs, and maybe will vanish one day by magic, if you're lucky.

Sensing how deep his superstition about warts really is, I recommend a book, *Superstitious? Here's Why!*[2] urge him to read the section on warts, and agree to accept this as a report.

The result? *Mirabile dictu!* Barry Saltz practically memorizes that paragraph on warts and reads the book through cover to cover in one 4-hour sitting. Moreover, having finally gone to a library, he has now become aware of some very readable books about health and strength—a major interest. Before the semester is over, Barry Saltz can tell you all about *The Wonders Inside You*[3] by Cosgrove, *Magic Bullets*[4] by Sutherland, and *Boy's Book of Body Building*[5] by Pashko. True, he still refers to de Kruif's *Hunger Fighters* as "Hunger Pains"! Who cares! Barry Saltz is on his way!

Does it matter? Does it really matter that the Saltz nose now goes between the covers of a book? Is this a "summum bonum" commensurate with the effort expended? Yes, indeed! For, of all youth's divine rights during that precious period we call "The school years," I place very high the enjoyment of books. Learning how to earn a living is one thing; but in an age of steadily increasing leisure, learning how to live—joyously—is, to me, prime. And learning how to do it, among other ways, through books—is quintessential.

Perhaps no one has said it for me better than Paul Bueter, a 17-year-old senior who, after viewing *A Night to Remember*[6] on TV, was one of dozens who had remembered it vividly enough to ask for the Walter Lord original. Queried on why he wanted the book, having just seen the TV version, he gave what seems to me the classic answer to those who see TV as the substitute for reading—"Sure, it was good," he says of the TV performance, "but I don't know . . . I didn't really get the feeling of how it was on the *Titanic* on that black night. . . . How could you, with all those camera lights on the people?" In order for Paul to "really get the feeling" of that black night to remember, he needed more than brilliant camera lights. He needed the glow of his own imagination.

Yes, I'm glad I got Barry Saltz to read for other reasons. Just as we learn to write by writing, we learn to read by reading. It's not always that "Johnny doesn't read because he can't." It's often that "Johnny can't read because he doesn't."[7]

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[2] Julie Forsyth Batchelor and Claudia De Lys. *Superstitious? Here's Why!* New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1954.

[3] Margaret Cosgrove. *The Wonders Inside You.* New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1955.

[4] Louis Sutherland. *Magic Bullets.* Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1956.

[5] Stanley Pashko. *Boy's Book of Body Building.* New York: Grosset & Dunlap.

[6] Walter Lord. *A Night to Remember.* New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1955. Bantam Paperback, 1962.

Yes, I'm glad I got Barry Saltz to read because I know that the meat upon which our Caesars feed is anti-intellectualism, "know nothingism." In the growing struggles between freedom and authoritarianism, it is better for us all that the Barry Saltzes be thinking, questioning, probing citizens—not vacuums or vegetables. Though there are many paths towards this end, I respect reading as one of them. I'm glad I got Barry Saltz to read.

As chairman of an academic subjects department in a New York City vocational school (from 1956 to 1961), I have had the chance to study hundreds upon hundreds of Barry Saltzes in their raw, untutored state. Coming from homes where the bedtime story at twilight had never been heard and where the television set had replaced the reading lamp, they sat in our classrooms with all the symptoms of cultural blight. Their median IQ score was 85, their reading scores were poor, and their practice of the language arts was unique. One boy who was asked at an assembly to read from Proverbs in the *Bible* prefaced his oral reading with the announcement that he would read some "proud verbs" in the *Bible*. Youngsters asked to write on the "Star-Spangled Banner" began with "Oh, say can you sing by the doors early light?" A lad, reporting on a TV show he liked insisted that the hero was "Quiet Earp." Once in a discussion, I used the term *bachelor of arts* and asked for a definition—"He's a guy who got away by staying single."

Family ties, as the ordinary middle-class youngster enjoys them, were *terra incognita* to many of my boys. Fully 20 percent lived at home with but one parent, the second having vanished, run off, or died. I had boys who had never been served a warm breakfast by mother since they could remember. I had boys who had never had a heart-to-heart talk with father. Yet let mother or father be called to school, on some matter disciplinary, and we were often invited to "Hit him! Whack him! I mean treat him like he was your own!"[8]

Spawned in such homes, the Barry Saltzes never go much beyond talking of "Who's gonna win the fight next week?" watching crime shows on TV, going to the movies with their dates, ogling the girlie magazines. Of the 900 boys at my city vocational school, no more than 20 ever found it worthwhile to take in a Broadway play or a concert at Carnegie Hall even though both are little more than an hour from any boy's home. "That's for eggheads," Billy Brenner, 16, tells me when I offer him a ticket. "It's too far, anyhow. You come home too late." Yet two nights a week, religiously, instead of sitting down with his homework, he marches to the bowling alley where, until midnight, he enjoys a few short beers and the thrill of crashing a 16-pound bowling ball against the varnished pins.

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[7] Estelle H. Witsling, "Johnny Can't Read Because He Doesn't," *High Points*, 38: 52–59, January 1956.

[8] Charles G. Spiegler, "A Teacher's Report on a 'Tough School,' " *The New York Times Magazine*, Nov. 24, 1957.

Small wonder, then, that when we talk to them of *Silas Marner* they hear us not. Their ears are tuned to the change-of-period bell. We may appeal to them with a lovely print of an English landscape. They see it not; their eyes are on the clock. Desperate, we bring out the great, beloved classics which are on the world's permanent best-seller lists. With pomp and ceremony, with a laying-down of red carpets, with a lighting of candelabra, we introduce children to these classics. But we leave them unmoved. So, in quiet resignation, we affix to them the label "retarded readers"; and that great cultural divide between the middle-class teacher (reared on Shakespeare and Browning and Eliot) and the sons and daughters of "blue-collar" America (so often raised on comics, the movies, and television) becomes deeper and wider.

We've got to heal that breach, and we can! But this can be done only with understanding—the understanding that the Barry Saltzes are, as the late Elizabeth Rose of New York University put it "allergic to print"; that much of what we, his teachers, choose for him to read is not only *not* a cure for this allergy but also an *extension* of it; that only the book which "packs a wallop for him" may hope to effect a cure. The remedy? Begin with a book that hits him where he lives![9]

I learned this back in 1954 when, as a new departmental chairman, I walked into the middle of a cold war between most of the 900 students in the school and most of the English teachers. The issue at first was books, *required* books for classroom study. The battleground was the bookroom piled high with *Silas Marner* and *Giants in the Earth* (grand books for college-bound youth, but sleeping pills for vocation-bound youngsters). There was a curtain dividing pupil and teacher, which, though made only of paper and print, was no less formidable than today's Iron Curtain. You walked into classes where teachers were devoting a full term to *Silas Marner*, and you saw children with heads on desks and eyes shut. You walked into the library and rarely saw a youngster except with a prescribed booklist based on the predilections of his teacher. The long and short of it was that children were not reading, and teachers had thrown in the sponge with the excuse, "They can't!"

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[9] Elizabeth Rose, "Literature in the Junior High School," *English Journal*, 44: 141–147.

I believed they could, if we would but give a boy a title, a book jacket, a theme that rang true; if we could but talk to him colorfully about the world of books! Don't limit him to the confines of prescribed booklists or restrictive formulas for making book reports. Let the world and its infinite wonders be the subjects he may choose from, I begged. Let him begin with what he likes, appeal to his interests—and he will read.

When we inaugurated a 3-day book fair, displaying 2,000 books dressed in jolly jackets and written on hundreds of lively subjects I was sure youngsters liked, there was a shaking of heads among some members of the faculty. "I'll bet you won't sell a hundred books," one asserted smugly. "All these kids want is comics and girlie books. They won't buy anything decent!"

But they did. For 3 days, while English classes were cancelled, children browsed, read at random, bought or not as fancy struck them. And when the fair was over, we knew that these were the 3 days that had shaken our smug little world. The Johnnies who would buy "only comics and girlie books" had dug into their after-school-odd-job savings to take home 1,123 good books. Granted, Bill Stern's *My Favorite Sports Stories* and *The Real Story of Lucille Ball* were best sellers, but not far behind were the *Burl Ives Song Book*, *The Red Pony*,[10] and books of science fiction. And higher than anyone dared predict were *The Cruel Sea*[11] and *Mutiny on the Bounty*.[12]

Though no teachers were panting down the students' necks to "read this!" they did guide student choice. Some, like the big, broad-shouldered lad who was about to buy *The Scarlet Letter*[13] because he thought it was a football story, needed guidance. Some, like the nature lover who was about to buy *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*[14] because he thought it was on target for a report he was making on trees, needed guidance. Others passed by the proffered help, however, and bought many books with vocabulary loads somewhat beyond their level. It didn't matter. "Interest," George Norvell, former New York State Supervisor of English, has said, "leaps over all reading barriers, including vocabulary."[15]

Johnny wasn't sleeping through "Lit" class by now. We relegated *Silas Marner* to a basement storeroom and gave the youngsters livelier fare. Booker T. Washington in his struggles for an education became a far more genuine superman to them than the comic book man with wings. It was *Kon-Tiki*[16] on the perilous Pacific that replaced Eliot's nineteenth-century England. You could now walk into a class studying *Kon-Tiki* and see Jimmy Kolofney at the blackboard writing a letter of congratulations to Thor Heyerdahl. While he is expressing his admiration for the Skipper and "that crazy, wonderful think you done," seven boys are rehearsing in two separate corners of the room: three of them in one corner play the crewmen of the *Kon-Tiki;* the other four make up a TV panel that will ask the intrepid voyagers all about the dangers, the thrills, the uncertainties of their venture.

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[10] John Steinbeck. *The Red Pony*. New York: Viking Press, Inc., 1959.

[11] Nicholas Monsarrat. *The Cruel Sea*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1951.

[12] Charles Nordoff and James Norman Hall. *Mutiny on the Bounty*. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1932.

[13] Nathaniel Hawthorne. *The Scarlet Letter*.

[14] Betty Smith. *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*. New York: Harper & Row, 1947.

[15] George W. Norvell. *The Reading Interests of Young People*. Boston: D. C. Heath & Co., 1950.

Before long all eyes are focused on Jimmy's letter on the blackboard, to correct it—because "You can't send junk to a big shot like that." Later the class turns to the TV panel, which raises some incisive questions on the madness, the glory, and the thrill of adventure dear to any boy's heart. It also raises a question or two that better-bred boys might not ask: "Didja ever 'chicken out'?" "Hey, didja miss girls?" The end-of-period bell rings in the nick of time.

By the end of the year, the majority of our 900 students were reading at least a book a month. Many were doing far better. Library circulation had gone from 600 to 1,500.

Neither "climax" nor "denouement" cluttered up book reports now. As make-believe salesmen, kid critics, Hollywood producers, television panelists, they reported in terms they knew. "I like," "I love," "I hate," "I get mad," "It's great," "exciting," "heartwarming"—these terms indicated how books hit them. "I love that book because it suits my taste," wrote Johnny Gallardo about *Lives of a Bengal Lancer.*

Whatever the individual taste, we had given each of those 900 students a sporting chance to satisfy it. Now that the fair was over and the appetite whetted, I began to observe, ever so occasionally, especially after lunch, a paperback under the arm of a lad or two where earlier in the day there had been a lunch bag. Boys were beginning to walk off their hero sandwiches with short strolls to the neighborhood paperback gallery, sometimes bringing back a sample or two. Soon we discovered the Teen Age Book Club[17] whose titles caught the fancy of many. We were beginning to establish a rapport between children and books, helping many of our boys buy them cheaply, start their own libraries, and see for themselves how "even the smallest library is a veritable Treasure Island that takes no *Hispaniola* to reach—its buried riches no pirate's chart to locate."

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[16] Thor Heyerdahl. *Kon-Tiki.* Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., 1950.

[17] Teen Age Book Club, sponsored by *Scholastic* magazine.

This is not to boast that success was absolute and universal. We still had lots of lads like Lenny Kalter who equated the carrying of books with the role of the sissy. It wasn't until Miss Isenberg (public librarian assigned to visit our classes regularly to bestir the reluctant dragons) had introduced young Master Kalter to Henry Gregor Felsen's *Hot Rod*[18] that Lenny could identify with a character in a book —in this instance Bud Crayne, *Hot Rod*'s hero, and lover of speed. Lenny borrowed the book, devoured it, then became so avid a reader on the subject that *Street Rod*[19] (also by Felsen), *Mexican Road Race*,[20] *Thunder Road*,[21] and *The Red Car*[22] were finished within 2 weeks. Then he began searching the stacks all over the city for "anything by Mr. Felsen." When he heard that we were planning to invite an author to visit our assembly and set the keynote for our next Book Fair, he volunteered to write the first formal letter of invitation he had ever written in his life—you guessed it—to Gregor Felsen.

Last, but hardly least, let me suggest how television far from proving a menace to reading, as is so often alleged, proved a boon. My major premise here is that culturally deprived youngsters limit their horizons to the four walls of the home, the four corners of the neighborhood, and, as with many of my boys, the six pockets of the pool table. Television is their new window to the world. Through it they find the fullest, richest array of new interests man has ever known. Where or when, for example, in all recorded history could so many Americans in the year 1962 with a flip of the dial take an hour-long journey through the White House, with its gracious First Lady as hostess and guide?

My minor premise is that interest is the key to reading. My conclusion follows naturally. Television, by creating interest, can become the road to wider reading.

I saw it strikingly one morning in April of 1956. I was sitting in my office composing my weekly bulletin when the door burst open and two of my boys came dashing in.

"Got somp'n by Ogden Nash?" came the breathless query.

Slowly I raised my head.

"Who?"

"Ogden Nash—you know," they exclaimed, "the guy wid dose crazy rhymes."

My pen dropped; my ears perked up. Surprised, indeed delighted, that my boys were interested in reading one of America's most literate creators of verse, I asked: "You boys doing a book report on Mr. Nash?"

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[18] Gregor Felsen. *Hot Rod.* New York: E. P. Dutton & Co.

[19] Gregor Felsen. *Street Rod.* New York: Random House, 1953.

[20] Patrick O'Connor. *Mexican Road Race.* New York: Ives Washburn, 1957.

[21] William Campbell Gault. *Thunder Road.* New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1952.

[22] Don Stanford. *The Red Car.* New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co., 1954.

"Nope!" they parried, "no book reports—we just wanna read sump'n by him. We went to the library, but the other guys beat us to it. *You* got sump'n?"

Happily I had. And happily, Tommy Gorman, a 15-year-old butcher-to-be, and Peter de Stefano, a 16-year-old baker-to-be, walked off with every copy I owned of *I'm a Stranger Here Myself.*[23] When you realize that before this day the closest Tom and Peter had come to voluntarily exposing themselves to rhythms and rhymes was the "popular song sheet," you realize what a move forward they had made.

This did not erupt full grown from the head of Zeus. It happened at a time when their English teacher found the going rough as he started a unit on poetry. So he looked for help. Since television was not a dirty word in our school, he looked to see how that week's TV programing could help. And lo, that Sunday Ed Sullivan could! For Sullivan had invited Noel Coward to read from the works of Ogden Nash to the background music of Saint Saens, as played by Andre Kostelanetz. So the homework assignment for that Sunday said, "Watch Sullivan"—not just the song, not just the dance—but *all* of it! With the results we have seen.

Teach a little "dialmanship" and TV can become an Aladdin's lamp far more wondrous than the Arabian original. Our librarian, too, recognized that and arranged a bulletin board entitled *IF YOU WATCH: WHY NOT READ.* If you watch the weather spots, why not read *Weathercraft*[24] by Spilhaus, for example? If you watch Leonard Bernstein, why not read *Leonard Bernstein*[25] by David Ewen?

If, in fact, we really want to introduce the culturally deprived youngster to books he can read on subjects he wants to read about, we are living in an age of huge abundance. For, in truth, this is the Golden Age of Writing for Youth, with many magnificent series available to them; with real writers (Quentin Reynolds, Dorothy Canfield Fisher, John Gunther, to name but a few) writing for them.

I cannot begin to tell you of the many, many hundreds of "juveniles" I have read myself with admiration, and been privileged to review and annotate, with a very high respect for what they can mean to children, and, with genuine appreciation for what they have meant even to ancient old ME.[26]

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[23] Ogden Nash. *I'm a Stranger Here Myself.* New York: Little, Brown, 1941.

[24] Athelstan Spilhaus. *Weathercraft.* New York: Viking Press, 1951.

[25] David Ewen. *Leonard Bernstein.* Philadelphia: Chilton Books, 1960.

[26] The reviews of the books under this category appear in the section called "Books You May Like," in Marion Monroe, Gwen Horsman, and William S. Gray. *Basic Reading Skills,* Chicago: Scott, Foresman & Co.

The job of preparing the proper materials for the customer we are talking about is, however, far from complete. So formidable, indeed, is this task, with both the textbook and the trade book, I would take a leaf from the book of the Ford Foundation man who recently recommended a *Vice President-in-Charge-of-Heresy* for every school system—by proposing a *Vice President-in-Charge-of-Searching for-and-Finding-Materials-Written-So-That-the-Children-We-Are-Concerned-With-Will-Read-Them-With-Interest.* As my first piece of advice to said VPI, I would urge: "Listen to the children you are serving." Here are their answers:

1. The subject has to be worth it to us. We like books about animals, aviation, careers, hobbies, sports, the sea, westerns. We love lots of adventure, plenty of excitement, slews of interesting facts about science and things.

2. Don't treat us like babies. We may not be such "hot" readers, but that doesn't mean if you give us an easy book about ducks on a farm we'll cackle over it gleefully. We had that stuff in the third grade, remember?

3. Give us lots of good pictures, good drawings, and big print. As one of the fellows said, "I can't read when the print on the pages is so small. After a while I lose my eyesight."

4. You have to know how to write. Maybe the fellow who likes to read a lot will stand for some boring parts, but not us. If you want us to read don't beat around the bush but come to the point. Give us a story that pushes us to go on to the next page and the next page—and we'll stay with it.[27]

Let us search out the books which, as Robert Lawson has put it, will give these kids "... the chuckles ... the gooseflesh ... the glimpses of glory" they love. The books are here, now, asking to be discovered and enjoyed.

Books and reading are a staple in such a program not only for the well-endowed, but also for *all* the children of *all* the people. Only in the faith that there are no "second-class" citizens in our schools, a faith conceived, nurtured, and cherished in pride for nearly two centuries, can we hope to rise to the urgent tasks ahead. I am supremely confident that we shall.

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[27] Charles G. Spiegler, "Reading Materials for Retarded Readers," *Materials for Reading*, Supplementary Educational Monographs, No. 6. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957.

# Ways To Improve Oral Communication of Culturally Different Youth

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**Mark Twain once said in a sarcastic moment, "Nothing so needs reforming as other people's habits." Yet, I believe he would approve of our interest in the problem of how to reform the speech habits of culturally different students, for our purpose is to break down language barriers and to help each individual acquire a language proficiency that will help him to achieve his greatest potential. As Thomas Pollock has said, "Civilization depends upon communication. Language is the basic instrument through which human beings share their thinking. If a youth is to develop as an individual, contribute to society, and participate in its benefits, he must have command of the social processes of language."[1]**

**The schools and all the institutions in a democratic society exist for the purpose of promoting the growth of the individual. For his growth in oral communication, most public high schools offer elective classes for improving the speech arts. These attract mainly those who already possess some speech proficiency. Most schools also have speech correction classes which are staffed with specialists to take care of those with severe defects. If we define a speech defect as any deviation from normal speech that calls attention to itself or to the speaker in a negative way, the specialists could not possibly accommodate in their speech correction classes all the students who need help.**

**This problem of reforming, or changing, language habits, then, concerns all English teachers and particularly those in urban centers where we find a great many students of foreign extraction or of various ethnic backgrounds for whom English is either a second**

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[1] **Thomas Clark Pollock, et al., "The English Language in American Education," A Report of the Modern Language Association Commission on Trends in Education, 1945, *Issues, Problems, and Approaches in the Teaching of English*, George Winchester Stone, Jr., ed. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1961, p. 137.**

language or like one. For the student whose native speech, even though it is American English, contains a great many structural, articulatory, and intonational differences, learning to speak a language that is acceptable on the high school level is surely like learning a second language, which is not an easy task.

Virgil Anderson, who wrote *Improving the Child's Speech*, estimated as far back as 1953 that there were approximately 2,500,000 speech-defective children of school age in the United States—over 40,000 in a city the size of Los Angeles, for example, and around 350 in a small city of 20,000.[2] The number today far exceeds that of 1953 because of continued immigration and migration, along with growth in language awareness. During the past 10 years, Detroit's population alone has increased by more than 200,000 because of the influx of southern and foreign migrants who have brought with them their own speech habits. It is, therefore, increasingly important for the classroom teacher to be cognizant of the individual speech needs of his students and to have some means of coping with them.

I emphasize the speech aspects of language, for the oral symbols are basic and the child's written expression is likely to reflect his speech. Two examples of this from my own class papers are: "All people should be treated like human *beans*," spelled b-e-a-n-s (these students seldom use the sound of *ing*) and, "Use the right *can* of language," spelled *c-a-n* (*kind* was pronounced *can* following their usual substitution of the low front vowel *ae* for the dipthong *ai*). If we can improve spoken language, written language should also improve.

In adult life we spend at least 90 percent more of our time expressing ourselves orally than we do in writing; therefore, it is deplorable that so little emphasis is placed on improving oral communication in the English classroom.[3] Of course, the aim is to develop in the learner to the best of his ability the four basic aspects of any communications arts program—listening (or understanding), speaking, reading, and writing. These are interrelated and all have to do with developing language expression. Although for many pupils they can best be taught concurrently in integrated language arts units, for children with special problems special practice drills are needed.

My own teaching experience has been devoted to meeting the needs of large numbers of pupils, particularly migrants or children or grandchildren of migrants who are mainly at a low socioeconomic level. Although the pupils speak American English, they speak and continually hear one distinctive variety of it at home or in the neighborhood, where they may continue to speak it for rapport. However, if they are to become employable or to succeed in business, they must learn to shift into the more dominant patterns of the area in which they may later live and work. For these pupils many of the techniques of second-language learning are applicable.

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[2] Virgil A. Anderson, *Improving the Child's Speech*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1953, p. 7.

[3] Lecture by Preston H. Scott, head of the Speech Department, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan, 1940.

I cannot recommend too highly the book by Mary Finocchiaro entitled *Teaching English as a Second Language in Elementary and Secondary Schools.*[4] This book is full of practical ideas that would enrich teaching in any situation. For good oral drill games particularly suited for the junior high school level, I might suggest *Good English Through Practice*[5] by Marjorie Barrows.

Before we discuss method, let us review some of the factors we know about this very complex phenomenon called language. Because we express our individual personalities and communicate our wants and desires through language, and because we are judged partly by what we say, language is a very personal possession and we become highly sensitive about it. As English teachers, we must be aware of this sensitivity. It may help if we remember that, when we point one finger at someone else, we are pointing three fingers at ourselves.

We know that language is a living, changing set of symbols and the better we know the code, the more effectively we can communicate in it. Part of our job as English teachers is to preserve the basic code and to maintain respect for it. However, unlike the Morse code, there is no one exact set of symbols. Instead, there are many acceptable variations of what may be considered the standard code, and there are different levels of language which may fit various situations. To be most effective, one must be socially mobile in his use of language so that the listener's attention is on *what* one is saying, not on *how* he is saying it. A visit to the United States Senate convinces us of the many acceptable varieties of American English typical of the particular areas from which the senators come. These variations are mainly in the pronunciation and enunciation of vowels.

To some people of one area, the variations used by those of another area may be very amusing. I'm reminded of the Yiddish dialect stories, the lovable Hyman Kaplan, the minstrel shows that depend on Negro dialect, and the comparisons of the Boston dialect of President Kennedy and Senator Lodge made by Frank B. Gilbreth in his "Dictionary of Bostonese." Whether we have positive or negative reactions to slight variations depends upon the personality of the individual, his educational and cultural level, and his freedom from structural deviations. So long as the speaker is effective in various situations, and so long as there are positive reactions from his listeners, we would not wish to change his language. Should a Bostonian come to live in the Midwest for any length of time, or vice versa, he might adjust his speech unconsciously through imitation, or consciously to avoid being conspicuous. More than anything else, as human beings, we want to be accepted, to be approved, and to be recognized, each as an individual.

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[4] Mary Finocchiaro, *Teaching English as a Second Language in Elementary and Secondary Schools.* New York: Harper and Row, 1958.

[5] Marjorie Wescott Barrows, *Good English Through Practice.* New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1956.

That variations will decrease and one common standard American language will, in time, prevail seems likely because of our humorists, our television commentators, and the fact that we are a Nation on the move. In one recent year, approximately one of every five Americans pulled up stakes and changed residence. Three and one-tenth percent of these moved to another state. It is already possible to move from the Pennsylvania-Ohio line all the way across to the Pacific Coast without being aware of dialect differences. This is one of the largest dialect areas, or speech communities, in the world and represents the General American dialect that will probably become more or less standard for the Nation. This is the dialect that is used in teaching English to foreigners here and in teaching abroad through the United States Information Service, which has 389 cultural centers in 80 countries of the world.[6] There is, then, little chance of disagreement on what dialect we should teach.

We know, too, that speech is an overlaid process. Each organ that contributes to the speech mechanism has another primary purpose. Speech is a learned activity; it is not biological or racial. Only about 15 percent of those said to have defective speech have any physical basis for it, and only about 10 percent more have speech defects which could be classed as complicated or involved. In fact, about 75 percent of all speech defects, according to Anderson, are the result of bad habits based on poor listening, carelessness, laziness, indifference, or imitating poor models.[7] Within this 75 percent are most members of the ethnic groups in the process of acculturation. They provide a challenge to the English teacher. Anderson does not include the challenge of grammatical or structural errors with which the English teacher has always been concerned.

Our Nation has progressed to an unequalled extent because of our principle that each individual is entitled to rise to his highest potential. In our public schools we hold that no child shall be handicapped by artificial restraints in his struggle to rise. It, therefore, becomes the task of every teacher to participate in helping each student to equip himself with the language habits used in conducting the affairs of our country and in making himself acceptable socially.

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[6] Lincoln Barnett, "The English Language," *Life*, March 2, 1962, p. 75.

[7] Anderson, op. cit., p. 13.

The teacher, however, can only point the way; it is the child who must change. His language is definitely related not only to his success in school, but also to his possibilities for subsequent employment. Much of the urge to change depends upon the child's concept of himself and of his place in the democratic society. What he does, what he learns or avoids learning is related either to building up or defending his self-concept.

How do we go about setting the climate so that the child will want to make the effort to change? For one thing, we must broaden his self-concept by giving him pride in his own culture and by making him aware of the heroes and leaders of his own ethnic group who have mastered his same problems. An assembly speaker, a book, or a picture on the bulletin board may provide the initial motivation.

We must let him retain pride in the language he already has, even guide him into taking classes in Spanish, German, or whatever foreign language he understands so that he can increase his proficiency in it. In the case of those who have retained through historical, regional, and social class influences a brand of English that contains many unacceptable structural deviations, the learning of a foreign language helps to focus attention on language as a tool and skill and to develop facility in usage. But we should encourage pupils to assume the responsibility of speaking English proficiently. We may say to them, "This brand of English you are using is a language in itself, which may have its uses for you. It is like an old suit of clothes that we don't throw away because we may still want to wear it on some occasions. But we would not think of wearing the old suit for a job interview or a dance, if we have something better to wear. Here in class you can acquire the language used by most Americans in the business world. This language will then be yours to use when you want and need it."

This is the approach I use with my students, many of whom use such structural deviations as "he have," "they is," "he taken," and "that's mines," adding the *s* sound, but saying, "ten cent," omitting the *s*. They may substitute *f* for *th* as in *bofe*, *I* for *e* as in *pInny*, the low front vowel *ae* for *aI* to confuse *rat* with *right*, and use a great many nonstandard expressions. We must offer them alternate usages and so strengthen them that the English language of the business world will be for them a second language into which they can move for upward social mobility.

Let us review the speech process in order to arrive at a technique to improve these students' speech. As talking animals, we learn to communicate verbally through various stages of development from crying to babbling to lallation (the first ear-voice reflex), on to the stage of echolalia where we echo, or imitate, the sound patterns we hear about us. As Donald Lloyd says, "We learn to speak at our mother's knee and at other low joints."

It is in this latter stage, the echolalic, that the special sound pattern of the child's native language becomes established. As he goes on into articulate utterance, his speech becomes more refined and fixed so that by the time he is about 6 years old, the habits that will form his adult speech pattern are already set. To reeducate and build new habits, we must take him back to the stage of lallation, sharpen his ear-voice reflex, and carry him on through echolalia, giving him good standard forms to imitate. The language laboratories for teaching foreign languages have been successful in our schools because they have been established on this premise. It is time we English teachers had them, or at least time we began to make greater use of their techniques for the teaching of English to these pupils.

A year of independent study as a Ford Fellow led me to this conclusion. Part of the study included a questionnaire given to 11th- and 12th-grade students in six Detroit high schools. The study showed that the selected list of 102 nonstandard usages, which the students were free to check or not to check, were both heard and used at least four times more frequently by students in schools representing regional speech patterns than by students in schools representative of Detroit area patterns. The results of this study were published by Wayne State University Press for the National Council of Teachers of English. The book is entitled *Improving Patterns of Language Usage.*[8] It is divided into three parts: "The Problem," "Possible Ways To Me[illegible]," and "Suggested Remedial Lessons and Exercises."

The time needed to develop and test English lessons on tape geared to meet this problem was provided by the U.S. Office of Education in a 2-year grant. During these 2 years I have been relieved of school duties in order to direct, to test by analysis of covariance, and to evaluate a research project under Title VII of the National Defense Education Act.

The set of 14 taped lessons we developed are of the listening-repeating type, but they incorporate some writing. They serve as a type of teaching machine to explain the structure of the language as well as to change particular usages by giving the student the opportunity to imitate and to practice using better forms. Skinner's theories are involved in that the tapes give immediate reward and reinforcement. The taped lessons are also built upon linguistic concepts, but retain some traditional terminology. To hold interest, because each tape runs just under 30 minutes, we use a variety of rich voices, both male and female, and a variety of teaching techniques and student activities.

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[8] Ruth I. Golden, *Improving Patterns of Language Usage.* Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1960.

Ideally, the tapes could be used in the foreign language laboratory, but we included them as an English classroom activity in a three-group plan with the groups rotating their activities of speaking, reading, and writing during the 3 middle days of the week, while still carrying on other language arts units.

We find that the tape recorder has so many valuable uses for teaching English that we think there ought to be one in every classroom ready for use at any moment. There is much wasted time if you have to requisition a recorder from an audiovisual room or get one out of a closet and set it up. Bolting the recorder to a table seemed to be our best solution.

We have our basic spelling words recorded on tape. If a teacher expects to give the same spelling lesson more than once, he might as well hold a microphone in front of him the first time he dictates it. Thereafter he is free to take the roll or to do other work as he wanders around the room while the spelling test is on and the students are getting training in listening. If the teacher's voice over the tape sounds natural to the students, they will then believe that their own voices, which sound so unreal over tape at first, really do represent the way they sound to others.

Hearing one's own faulty articulation and structural errors over tape can be one of the greatest motivating forces for pupil self-improvement that I can imagine. After there is pupil awareness and desire to improve, the next logical step is to give pupils good forms to imitate and to give them practice in hearing themselves saying the approved forms.

Along 2 walls in the corner of our classroom are 2 phonojack boards, making 12 earphone stations in all, partitioned with plywood. Under the rotating group plan, one group will be at the corner using earphones for listening and repeating lessons. Another group will be reading, since lack of reading background is at the heart of much of the language problem. The third group will be in individual contact with the teacher in a small circle while working on their writing or speaking difficulties.

For the reading group, we have tried various materials including the *Practical English Magazine*, the *SRA Reading Laboratory*, and a Scholastic Magazines' reading kit which provides a classroom library of two shelves of books on a thematic unit. The unit we chose at Central High School was *Mirrors*, which pointed up our semester's theme of taking a look at ourselves, and particularly a look at our language.[9] One of the two books for common learning, *Best Television Plays*, edited by Gore Vidal,[10] contains a wealth of third-person singular verbs in the stage directions. Our students especially need to strengthen such forms of agreement between the subject and verb as in, "John laughs as he crosses the room and opens the window."

This three-group plan is conducive to creating an atmosphere of trust, cooperation, and a feeling of interest in the individual, which is what these students need so badly. Somehow through the earphones, which the students enjoy using, they also get the feeling that they are being individually instructed, and we have purposely tried to make our tapes seem warm and personal. The small circle contact is invaluable. This work, however, is not for an inexperienced teacher; it takes a calm, well-organized, friendly but firm attitude to manage any three-group activity successfully.

The experiment involved four classes, two control groups and two experimental groups. There were two oral and two written tests and an attitude inventory, all given before and after the special series of lessons. All groups were taught in the same way with the same material, the only difference being that the experimental groups went to the booths to hear the taped lessons while the control groups went to the booths to read the same material from scripts without hearing it. All groups had use of the tape recorder for recording the oral tests and for other speech activities, but we found that the special taped lessons in addition were highly effective in improving speech.

The teaching ideas I'd like to share in the rest of this paper are partly those used in the experiment, but mainly the result of almost 20 years of teaching in 4 Detroit high schools where there are culturally different students.

Much of the success of an English language laboratory class depends upon the attitudes and the individual aims set at the beginning of the semester. In the orientation period, we discuss the purposes and the need for education. We discuss all aspects of language, stressing in realistic terms the need for effective language in all walks of life. To clinch the discussion, students write letters to the teacher in which they introduce themselves and state their aims for the semester. This setting of aims paves the way for breaking into speech drills later whenever the need arises. We plan introductory talks to be taped, and individual or group projects to be presented later to the class.

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[9] Since the preparation of this paper, other useful educational materials, as well as revisions of the above titles, have become available.

[10] Gore Vidal, *Best Television Plays*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1957.

These projects provide most of the composition work for the semester, although purposeful letter writing is engaged in as frequently as possible. A sheaf of letters, usually written to an individual or to an organization within the school, will actually be mailed so that good writing is made meaningful. Replies to the letters lead to some informal conversations later. The presenting of the booklets or other individual projects gives practice in strengthening needed forms such as, "This picture" not "Dis pitcher" and in stressing agreement as in "This shows" and "It has."

To orient students to the use of the tape recorder for critical listening, we first give names or one-sentence introductions into a traveling mike from a relaxed sitting position. Even in so simple an exercise, we can learn the importance of emphasizing the surname so that it can be repeated in an introduction. Then we may try a sentence or two in "class on parade" order and hear a playback before giving introductory talks about our hobbies and interests.

"Class on parade" is a device I use frequently for many types of brief oral presentations. A whole row of students will rise at one time and take positions at the side of the class. Each student then waits for his turn, makes his brief presentation, moves to the other side of the room, and waits for his group to finish so that all can take their seats as the next group comes up. Barring illness, there are no exceptions. Anyone who is not prepared says so when his turn comes, but the moral support given when several rise at one time and the atmosphere of encouragement and informality seem to eliminate procrastinators.

This procedure works well and saves time during speech activities such as: the Inquiring Reporter, in which one student reporter asks each student two or three questions from a long list which they have all had time to consider; famous sayings, in which as a part of a unit on biography each student presents an adage or quotation and tells in his own words what it means to him;[10] memory work, such as a few lines from "The Gettysburg Address" in a ninth-grade Lincoln unit; or the explanation of a rule of courtesy.

Other classroom speech activities include various extemporaneous talks, introductions, business interviews, and panel discussions. A taped business interview with questions designed purposely to bring out deviations, if used, comprised the second oral test of our experiment. For choral reading, with the ninth grade, I especially like

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[10] We have typed a large collection of these sayings on 5- by 8-inch cards, and find them excellent for extemporaneous speech training as well as for uplifting values.

Alfred Noyes' "The Highwayman" because my particular students need practice in improving the *aI* sound through the repetition of *highwayman* and *riding, riding.* The correction of this one sound may be a key to changing the entire speech pattern. As students change this frequently used sound, they are often reminded to change other less desirable usages.

We have made up a little nonsense story about "The Rat Named Kite" which introduces the idea of having the students write what we call "stupid stories" to bring in the repetition of sounds or usages they particularly need to practice. We emphasize final consonants and the past tense signal *ed* by listing substitutions for words like *walked* and *said* and by classifying these words according to whether they have a *d* or a *t* sound at the end.

Besides the taped group lessons for usage drill practice, we frequently spend a few minutes on general oral drill. If someone says, "fave cent," we may take a minute to count in unison from "one cent, two cents," up to "ten cents," stressing the *s* sound. When trouble occurs in agreement of third person singular noun and its matching verb, or if we hear "seen" instead of "saw," we may take time out to drill on the conjugation of the verbs, jazzing up the rhythm to make the activity fun as well as to reinforce it in the memory.

For extracurricular motivation, we participate in speech contests and put on plays and variety shows. In two schools we have organized a speech and personality improvement club called "The Teen Talkers and Tapers." One club sponsored a schoolwide Better Speech Campaign complete with Tag Day, daily homeroom lessons in speech improvement, and colorful hall posters and bulletin boards.

We now have some proof of success, but one never knows how truly successful such speech efforts are because so much of the learning may be a delayed action process. If we hold to high standards, yet make speech activities pleasant and memorable, there will be positive results. We cannot change the student's speech habits for him, but we can help him to become aware of the need for change by becoming a more critical and discerning listener; we can give him good examples to imitate; and we can encourage his efforts at self-improvement.

# Subcultural Patterns Which Affect Language and Reading Development

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**My approach to the effect of cultural differences on reading and language will not be that of the researcher, either in social science or in linguistics. It will be the approach of a literary scholar thrust into teaching masses of freshmen, who concluded that the creation of literacy in the young is a problem involving whole persons in their cultural setting, and who set out to discover what scholarship had to say about that. Since no one field of study touches the human being and his language at all points, what I have to say will be interdisciplinary. It will also be theoretical and high minded, but with some leavening of experience.**

**We speak of culturally divergent youth and also of culturally disadvantaged youth. These are not quite the same things, and I wish to distinguish between them. A person may be culturally divergent without being disadvantaged thereby, or he may be disadvantaged without being divergent—or he may be both at once. We can make some grievous errors if we assume that cultural divergency necessarily means cultural disadvantage. There is a long history of Chinese and Japanese migrants to the United States who have successfully assimilated our values without abandoning their own, and who have made almost no contribution to the history of juvenile delinquency. Cultural strength meets cultural strength, we might say, and accommodates it, in the main happily. A similar situation exists with many of the present migrants coming to Miami from Cuba. They have a language problem, but it is temporary; they assimilate rapidly without excess damage to their pride.**

**The migrant Puerto Rican, on the other hand, is both culturally divergent and culturally disadvantaged. Coming to a different world using a different language, he has a difficult time maintaining his self-respect, as he faces the way of life he finds and the place he is expected**

to accept in the continental United States. The migrant southern white and Negro in our northern cities are culturally disadvantaged without being in any important way culturally divergent or divergent in language. We head into trouble if we think of these three situations as "similar" rather than "different." They *are* different.

For the Cuban, assimilation is on a level. He may even find that accented or broken English has commercial value for him. The Puerto Rican, however, meets a cultural monolith set mainly against him. A stranger and afraid, he penetrates the lowest level of the "have nots" in American society. The better he assimilates to that level the more difficult his further penetration may be. The migrant American is in a sociological sense culturally divergent, but only as any American assimilated to any American subgroup is. He is limited as much by his own expectations as by anything external to himself and his group. In terms of language, finally, the differences he shows are in themselves so trivial as to lay no special burden on him. His language problems are created in the schools and forced on him there.

Economic and social change has brought many new faces into the penniless, prolific, migrant populations of our great cities: unemployment brought about by automation alone seems to be creating a new mass of hard-core unemployables of low education and unneeded manual skills. In the United States, as everywhere in the world, the cities also seem to promise a life, bad as it is, preferable to hanging on in the countryside where life is even harsher. And there are always the refugees.

Forgive me for reviewing all this, which is surely known to you as well as to me, but I find it necessary to set my own thought into perspective. Other social forces affect these people also. Year by year the level of educational attainment creeps higher in the United States; nowadays more than half of each high school graduating class goes on to some kind of higher education. Thus each year more older people become a little more obsolescent in their education and a little more resistant to retraining. As the high school diploma drops a little in value, the value of each lower grade drops also. Yet even the present flood of college graduates fails to meet the need for cultivated brainpower. Handpower less, brainpower more—handpower less, machines more. Whatever happens in the suburbs, bad things happen in the cities. In Detroit, for example, half the 1958 graduating class of Miller High School had, up to 1961, never had a job. What of the ones who dropped out that year without finishing high school?

Our subject, then, turns out to be the literacy of children born to the have-not population in the older and more run-down sections of our great cities, what we should aim at, and how we should approach it. But even after saying so much, I cannot extract the thread of language and deal with it alone. A have-not population is not monolithic and homogeneous; it is a congeries of subcultures, defensively oriented in a hostile society. These cultures have their values, and these values are not all bad. Belongingness is a value; one must belong somewhere. Sharing is a value; at the table of the poor, there is always room for one more. Endurance is a value; it is good to get through one day more. Faith, loyalty, and silence are values; society is an enemy; say nothing to the cops. Companionship is a value, even in misery; you have to mean something to somebody. And love, in its myriad forms and expressions, is a value.

When children come to school from coherent groups which intercommunicate by means of a foreign language, the educational problem ought to be relatively simple, unless the school, as representative of the larger community, expresses contempt for the group and its language. If the group is large—as the Spanish-speaking population of the South and Southwest is large—then it is only common sense to teach the language of the groups to nonspeakers at the same age-levels as the foreign-speaking youngsters in English classes. It does a great deal for these children to be allowed to act as informants. Older children may be given special work in English as a foreign language. Modern techniques for this instruction have been quite well worked out. Very young children need have no special attention; left to themselves, they will work their way into the give-and-take of school life, and shortly their English will not be distinguishable from that of their schoolmates.

It is, then, the spoken English of the central city which concerns us as it is used by the children who live there. It is different from the English of college-educated teachers, different in its sounds, in its "grammar" and in its usage. The children have different terms for the same things, and terms for many things and processes not mentioned by adults, at least not in public and not in mixed company. Yet these differences, subcultural in origin, if you will, are not and need not be factors interfering with the literacy of these children. They will not stand in the way of reading and writing if they are accepted and let alone without remark. They are trivial surface differences compared to the great mass of underlying similarities between the language of these children and the language of educated adults. Many of them, in fact, are features of child language and will pass out of use as the child matures. All are, of course, provided by the community in which the child is immersed. When you fight them, you take on the community—not the larger community only, but the community of the school itself, of the turbulent, boisterous school corridors and playgrounds, and of the street; the community to which it is the child's normal and proper desire to belong, to fit into, to disappear in.

There are two main reasons for accepting the speech of the child, simply and noncommittally, during his early language education and, indeed, throughout all of it. The first is that it is his means of assimilating to all those persons to whom such security as he has is tied. He is, as I have said elsewhere, a kind of delegate from a speech community, an ambassador, as it were. When you touch him, you touch all those members of his family and his friends through him. Though his parents may say, "Git on down to that school and let them learn you some good English," they may not tolerate much of it when he brings it into the house. His playmates will tolerate it even less. I am not against introducing such discord into a child's life if it leads to some desirable educational objective, but in this case it does not. Not much good will come to a colored youngster by "learning to talk like all us white folks"; our vocabulary may not lead *him* to success. Change of speech will accompany or follow, not precede, his decision to make his way out of the world into which he was born. In any event, each person must *at all times* read his own speech off the page of standard English print, and put his own speech on the page when he writes. To change his speech in the process of leading him to literacy is to multiply the problems of literacy beyond his ability to cope with them.

The second reason for accepting the child's speech is that changing it is not necessary to reading instruction. He shares with his teacher all the features of language important to reading, no matter what dialect he speaks or what dialect his teacher uses. Obviously children who speak midland, southern, southwestern, mountain, and rural dialects can learn to read without giving up their local speechways; otherwise, the schools in the areas from which they have migrated to the cities might as well close down. Persons speaking all the dialects represented by in-migrants to the cities proceed to the highest degrees in universities in their home areas and to great national prominence. Standard written and printed English is the same for all of us, and I doubt that any English speech in the United States, cultivated or uncultivated, is closer to it than any other. A pretty good representation of London English of the 15th century, standard written English fits any modern spoken English quite loosely. Humanity adjusts so well to incongruities that northerner, southerner, New Englander, and people along the eastern seaboard—not to speak of the English, Irish, Scotch, Welsh, East Indians, and South Africans—all think that they speak what is written and that others do not.

There is considerable literature on the language learning of children. Scholars generally agree that the child who goes to school is in full command of the system of his language—as presented to him by his family and his community—and has it so thoroughly internized that he uses it without thought. He thus has it *in him* to apply to the process of becoming literate. As he learned his speech from experience with people who speak within and about a milieu, we may expect that he will learn written language from reading books composed within and about human society. His speaking vocabulary when he comes to school is already old and already beyond measure; he needs only to learn how the words that he knows (their pronunciation varying as their place varies within intonation patterns) relate to writing and print. It is reasonable to assume that as he learned the syntax and vocabulary of speech through engaging in the processes of hearing and speaking, he will learn the grammar and vocabulary of writing through engaging in reading and writing, and not through dictionary study, word lists, and grammar. Our problem is to set him as free in reading and writing as he is in hearing and speaking.

I come at last, then, to words and their meanings. A theory of language and reading must, of course, embody a theory of words and meanings compatible with the whole. That is, if one thinks, as I do, that children learn words from reading and do not learn reading from word-study, he ought to be able to state his reasons. Here I must go back to a chapter in *American English in Its Cultural Setting*,[1] "Meaning, Structural and Otherwise," for my rationale. To me, the word is simply one element in a hierarchy of elements which make up the sentence, in itself of no particular importance.

For many years I puzzled over the question of how the stream of noises which make up the sentence can communicate meaning. I decided, finally, that the sentence is a handy-dandy meaning generator, the words within it conveying meaning not so much by what they assert as by what they deny and exclude. This is a kind of reversal.

In effect, the sentence is a kind of game of 20 questions. You recall that it is possible in that game, within 20 questions (if they are well chosen), to zero in on a particular person or object in the mind of someone else: when animal or mineral is stated, half your problem is eliminated. Then by taking one half the terrestrial globe, you exclude the other half, and by eliminating large masses of possibilities, you finally get down to the point where an educated guess has a high probability of success.

The sentence operates similarly. Words are highly abstract items; each has a wide range of recorded significances—which is to say that outside a sentence, a word has no valid specific significance. If I give you the word *man* in isolation, you cannot possibly guess what meaning I have in mind for it. In the sentence, "Man has lived on this earth for fifty thousand years," *man* obviously means the human race; the term embraces *woman* as well. In the sentence, "Man never manages to get along with woman," *man* indicates the male half of the human race. I can run you through a dozen sentences, in each of which *man* has a different significance.

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[1] Donald J. Lloyd and Harry R. Warfel. *American English in Its Cultural Setting*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956.

Indeed, all common words are multireferential; to express specific meaning, their range of possible significance must be curbed. The instrument for doing this curbing is the sentence, and the device is like the game of 20 questions. Each meaning-element (intonation, pattern of order, function, word-class, and word) cuts away from each other meaning element anything which is incompatible with itself. In the end, the shrewd hearer or reader may know everything about a word except exactly what it does mean—its place in the sentence, in the subunit, in the word class, and in the general area in which it is significant. In fact, he may be so close that he mistakes it for its exact opposite.

One illustration should suffice. A colleague came to me troubled about a student. He had assigned the general subject, "The special virtue of one character in the Odyssey." This student, a girl, had chosen Penelope, and had written about her *promiscuity*. That was Penelope's virtue. The writer had spoken of her fidelity to her husband, her rejection of the suitors, her devices for stalling—weaving the web by day and unweaving it by night—and all her singleminded defense of her chastity. These, to the student, were summed up in the term *promiscuity*. The teacher said, "What shall I do? Send her to the dictionary?" I said, "No. Tell her what it means. She will say, 'Oh migod!'" He did and she did. Note that she knew everything about the word, down to the area in which it had meaning, but she chose the exact opposite of its significance. When she seemed furthest off, she was actually as close as she could get—without being right.

The means by which we learn words from reading has been defined by Martin Joos of the University of Wisconsin as "bridging the gap with the minimal semantic burden necessary." Thus if we meet the word *stroll* in "He strolled in the garden," we can use *was* to carry the minimal semantic burden, reading "He was in the garden." Later we may meet, "He strolled through the town," and we have added a sense of motion: "He moved in some as yet unspecified way through the town." Little by little, as we meet the word in different contexts, we will narrow its meaning-range down until we have it cold. The linguistic principle here is that the meaning of a form lies as much in its distribution—in the kinds and classes of other words and structural signals among which it appears—as in the history of experiences with its distribution. Many words can give significance to a sentence on a minimal basis without reflecting other significances relevant in other contexts.

From all this, you will have little trouble in defining my general stance on reading instruction. Reading instruction must be closely tied to speech in order to be successful. It should begin with familiar materials, the more familiar the better. It should not involve an attempt to change the children's speech, because that speech is the teacher's strongest ally. The child must learn to see the way he normally talks in the print on the page. Instruction should relate to the total speech system, dealing honorably with the fluctuating relations between letters and the sounds of actual speech. It should rest heavily on intonation, and the students should be provided with intonation contours rather than permitted to puzzle out their own. The teacher should talk out in normal speech patterns what is on the page, and encourage the children to do so also. No "reading singsong" should be permitted to develop. Reading instruction should consist almost entirely of reading, and not of related but ineffectual busywork. Words should never be treated in isolation. Words should be handled in signal groups that are also meaning groups. At any stage, the teacher should settle on general meanings of sentences, passages, and whole stories, rather than on specific meanings of specific words—meanings which may not be the same for the same words in the next passage.

In order to operate this way, teachers must know the *sound system* of English, especially and specifically that of the children's speech—and they should let it alone. Reading instruction should not be combined with speech correction, or with an effort to change the dialectal peculiarities of the children's speech toward any other, regardless of the difference in prestige. Reading teachers should know the *syntax* of English speech well enough to manipulate the language somewhat at various syntactical levels, and to create patterns for practice.

And finally, reading teachers should have enough uninhibited "ham" in them, enough of the dramatic impulse, to exaggerate, to push loud stresses up to extra loud and high pitches up to extra high: "The *sky* is falling," said Henny-Penny. "Let's go tell the *King!*" "Let's," said Foxy-Loxy, "but *first*, let's stop at *my* house for *dinner*." And teachers should nourish the dramatic impulse in every child, the impulse to push his own loud stresses up and his own high pitches higher, and to emphasize the strong, unsteady, slightly loping, thoroughly internalized rhythm of his native speech. And they should make sure that every reading lesson is a lesson *in* reading, not a lesson *about* reading.

If reading actually is, as I believe it is, a native language process, then the youngster, who must carry to the page the signals that he finds on the page (if he is ever to find them there) can be helped to discover in his own free speech all he needs to make him a good reader. For the nature of each language is compulsive on the native speaker; he must work in terms of it. The teacher, too, must work in terms compatible with the native language, the familiar speech of the child. He must do so knowledgeably; otherwise, he will blunder along with it unawares. He will criss-cross it irrelevantly without knowing that he is doing so, or he will blunder head-on into it.

We cannot afford such blunders. Our society places increasing demands upon literacy as we become more and more the makers, the custodians, and the managers of machines. In our world of vast and ever vaster organizations, literacy becomes day by day more essential to meaningful citizenship. Each reading cripple is a badly wounded person, a social reject in his own mind and in the minds of others. We cannot afford such cripples. If blundering with language tends to favor the development of reading cripples, reading instruction is obligated to discover the harmonies of language and move in harmony with them.

With all these regularities of language working for them, it is clear that it is not the dialectal or subcultural patterns of the culturally different children which affect their reading development. These youngsters have the main bases for learning which are brought to school by all children except very special ones (who require special treatment beyond the capabilities of the classroom teacher). They can be led into literacy; if they are not, they may well be led into delinquency. I have seen a rather closely held study of children in trouble which provided all information about each child: age, crime, previous crimes, kind of family, sibling relationship, church affiliation, and so on. In all these factors no consistency is to be found; the child may be from a good or poor home, may have one or both parents, may be first, middle, or last child, may or may not be a churchgoer, and so on. One thing only is consistent: each child was from two to seven grades below his proper level in reading. In our society, the value placed on literacy is so high that failure to read well produces a badly wounded person who may hit back in one way or another.

There is one subcultural factor which does affect the language development of these children, and it is one which I wish to touch on now. This factor is the set of attitudes toward language held by the teachers whom Allison Davis would call "aspiring middle class"—as many teachers are. These attitudes are partly learned in the school and college training of English teachers with its monolithic fixation on "correct English" as the main proper outcome of education in English and the language arts. It is a fixation so deep that it is not felt as a subject for question; it overrides whatever work in child development, educational psychology, or methods the teacher may have had, even if these have been more enlightened about language than usual. It is a fixation often nourished in the teacher's own sense that only by parting with his origins, learning correct English, and moving out of the neighborhood has he been able to cut himself off from the foreign, rural, or working-class ways of his parents. And it frequently expresses itself as a demonstration of real love and concern for the children, that they, too, should come up and out and away from a manner of life that is poverty-stricken, universally contemned, and dead-ended. Negro teachers especially, insisting that they cannot even understand the children whom they understand only too well, bear down brutally on the divergent phonology, "grammar," and usage of Negro children, communicating their own tension to the construction of the child's ultimate trauma about language. In most instances, all the mores of the school sustain them in this unfortunate practice where they should resist it. The alternative to this overemphasis on conformity to "middle class" speech, too, is unfortunate—the idea that the children are so low on the intelligence scale that their case is hopeless, and that the most the school can do is prepare them for the same manual occupations their parents engage in, keeping them off the streets and out of trouble as long as possible.

Certainly not every "linguistic approach" to the reading and language development of culturally different children will make them happy readers and effective writers. Linguists themselves tend to teach as they were taught rather than use the knowledge which descriptive linguistics provides. Much in current linguistics, misapplied in the classroom, tends to reinforce precisely those practices which will impede rather than advance the learning of the children. But if linguistic findings as a whole are drawn on and employed in a manner consistent with findings in other social sciences and psychology to create an environment favorable to language learning in the schools, then a whole new posture on the part of the teacher becomes possible. It is a posture much decried among the right-wing educational theorists: it is fundamentally nondisciplinary and permissive in regard to speech, marked by a courteous and studious respect for the children's speechways, to the extent of defining and recording exactly what they do say. It involves a great deal of reading with and to the children, to provide them with the delights and cultural nourishment other children get at home—the fairy tales, rhymes, and legends of literature. It begins where they are in language, wherever they are. It rests on the really rich and viable culture that almost any child carries within him to school, and it respects that culture. It relates the children's actual language to the printed page, and it lets the reading child talk the way his parents talk instead of "sounding out words" painfully, one by one, tonelessly, with strange and difficult sounds.

At present, if a child is in trouble with the community, the police, or the school, the school shows its harshest face to him in the language arts and English class. It is here that he finds the least praise and the most blame. The subcultural patterns which bring this about are not those of the children and they are not unchangeable. It is the patterns of the teachers which must change. Rather than let the athletic field or the shop represent the one place these children can excel, we can let them in on literacy. To do so, teachers need new knowledge, new attitudes, and new materials; but if the tieup between reading difficulties and delinquency is as close as it seems to be, we have no choice but to find out what we need to know and do what we need to do about reading.

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# Specific Programs

# The Detroit Great Cities School Improvement Program in English

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The Detroit Public Schools recognize their responsibility to provide the best possible educational experience for all their boys and girls—the average, the gifted, the slow learner, and the culturally deprived. This last group only too recently has begun to receive the attention it deserves. The word "deserves" is purposely used for two reasons: They must be helped, first, because they are human beings and, secondly, because of their vast but latent potential for learning and the possibilities that exist for awakening and harnessing that potential.

In 1957 in Atlantic City, superintendents and board members of 14 large-city (600,000 plus) school systems[1] met and concluded that immediate steps should be taken to find ways to improve the education of children with limited backgrounds. From this beginning has grown the nationwide educational experiment called the Great Cities School Improvement Project.

Detroit, like most other large cities, is using a many-pronged approach on several different levels. Most of the planned activities have been of too short a duration to be considered reliable research studies. Not all the data from experimental groups and control groups can be obtained, but there is available a great body of information, opinions, and feelings. Time alone will show which of the various experiments will be most helpful in improving the English competencies of the disadvantaged child.

## Improved Reading Materials

One part of the Detroit Great Cities Project involves the improved use of instructional equipment and materials and the development of educational materials adapted to the needs of the child with limited background. One of the difficulties of teaching reading in the primary grades has been to find a primer series that contains words and experiences which the child with limited background can relate to things in his own life.

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[1] Baltimore, Boston, Buffalo, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Los Angeles, Milwaukee, New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, San Francisco, St. Louis, and Washington, D.C.

Basic and supplementary reading texts were carefully examined for their suitability in this respect. The study revealed many amusing, if not educationally tragic, inconsistencies: Father with his usual gift for a family member was everything a proper middle-class father ought to be. The streets of the neighborhood were quiet and well kept, quite different from the blighted, socially disorganized areas of the inner city. The pleasant and substantial home was in great contrast to the bare, cell-like hovels of many culturally deprived. A similar pattern of the "never-never land" for these pupils was found in the portrayal of clothing, toys, games, social attitudes, and verbal content.

An additional study was made of the speaking vocabulary of culturally deprived children. The oral vocabulary of 132 such pupils who had just finished kindergarten was carefully recorded and tabulated. The examiners took children from 4 different schools and asked them 20 questions on different topics in individual interviews. In the 132 interviews the pupils spoke 33,668 running words, of which 1,365 were different. This vocabulary of over 1,000 words seemed to be significant—certainly a springboard for a language arts program.

A committee of reading specialists, together with citizens' and teachers' advisory committees under the direction of a language arts supervisor, Dr. Gertrude Whipple, is working in cooperation with a publishing company on a three-primer series which may prove to be a radical departure from the standard materials of this nature. In the reading series, situations and events common to the inner city child's experience are used. Words familiar to him are presented, although the usage is different from what his might be. Streets are crowded and houses are old, but well-kept. Some of the faces of the children in the stories are brown, and some are white.

The stories in these books have already been tried in several schools. The printed books with pictures will be in the schools of the Great Cities Project. Copies will be made available to other schools later.

## Experiments with Phonetics

The Language Education Department in the Detroit Public Schools has become increasingly aware of the growing importance placed on phonetics and/or phonemics in several areas of language arts instruction. A phonetic approach to the teaching of spelling and the success of elementary foreign language instruction through the repetition of sentence patterns and substitution encouraged other experiments. If one accepts the recommendations of foreign language instructors that a child beginning foreign language study should not be called on to read anything that he has not said, and that he should not write anything that he has not read, then the department should take another hard look at the program in English. Too many words in the beginning readers are not in the disadvantaged child's speaking vocabulary. Many of these words may actually be there, spelled correctly in the book, but not as the child says them or uses them, or as they are used at home. Many common words of the primers might almost as well be in a foreign language.

It has been found that the incidence of speech defects, such as cleft palate, stuttering, voice defects, lisping, aphasia, delayed speech and language, and speech limitations related to hearing loss, is approximately the same in all economic groups. However, there is a larger amount of poor articulation in the lower economic groups due to the imitation of poor speech used in the home. Therefore, the Special Education Department in Detroit is asking for more corrective speech teachers for the underprivileged school communities.

Assuming that there is some merit in the recommendation that a broader oral approach be made first, Dr. Mary Jean Kluwe has set up an experiment in one of our elementary schools to work on the child's spoken language before he meets the words on the printed page. Sets of readers using a definitely phonetic approach have been brought into the classrooms as a supplement to the regular basic series. Parts of the reading lesson each day (10 minutes) have been devoted to the phonetic exercises before the class went on into their regular reading. After 2 years, teachers, pupils, and parents are enthusiastic about pupil progress. This school, in which all classes read on an average of 1 or 2 years below grade level, now has most of the classes reading closer to their grade level.

At the termination of six semesters of this experiment, the initial 1B pupils will have had 3 years of instruction in this auditory/phonetic program. In Detroit schools the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills are administered in the 4B grade and are used to obtain comparison figures. The scores of all six experimental groups will be compared with the two groups in the preceding terms. In the tests that have been given to date, the experimental groups show consistent gain in each category except the subtest in capitalization. No difference in the mean scores of these tests is found to favor the control group. The difference in favor of the experimental over the control groups appears largest in the usage subtest (an increase of 6 months), in the vocabulary test (an increase of 4.3 months), and in the spelling subtest (a gain of 2.1 months). In this culturally deprived area where children hear only a regional dialect and substandard English, the phonetic approach seems to produce good results. It is not possible to say that it would be equally sucessful or necessary for boys and girls who hear standard English in their homes.

Following the 10-week period of repetition, the pupils are given a followup final test. The measureable improvement in test scores has been heartwarming, and offers encouragement to try further experiments of this kind. Just how lasting the good results will be or whether 10 weeks of repetition is too long or too short a period for some classes is not yet known. Scores on national tests administered later will give a more accurate evaluation of this teaching device. Here is an area in which the tape recorder can assist the classroom teacher and release him for more creative types of teaching, rather than for conducting a drill exercise.

## Core Program in Junior High Schools

The Detroit public junior high schools are definitely committed to a broader use of the block time or core class, generally English and social studies. In areas of the city that contain many culturally deprived children, this lengthened class period seems to be especially effective. Teachers have more time to become well acquainted with a small number of pupils. Pupils have a better opportunity to relate to a mature adult who is interested in them as individuals and in their improvement. Most studies of juvenile delinquents reveal that they never felt they had a mature, kindly adult in their lives who was interested in them as individual persons with their best interests at heart. The emphasis on meeting the needs and interests of the child in the block-time program seems to be producing results with the culturally deprived. Many, if not most, of the problems in remedial reading are emotional, and improved rapport steps up learning.

On the senior high school level English teachers in this program have had an especially rewarding experience. At the request of the English Advisory Committee of senior high school principals, the Language Education Department conducted a summer workshop of teachers who prepared a communication skills course for the slow learner and the culturally different. The course was geared to the needs and interests of those pupils whom Edgar Dale of Ohio State University calls "the forgotten third," the boys and girls who either drop out of school before graduating or finish at the bottom of their graduating class, the young people who make up a large percentage of the eight-out-of-ten who are currently unable to find jobs.

Because the unemployables of the future are in our schools today, this course is an attempt to make the English curriculum more interesting and challenging to them. Although the schools alone cannot solve the problem, they must do everything possible to keep these potential dropouts in school and to provide a rescue operation in the form of a curriculum tailored as much as possible to their needs.

This curriculum is *attainable and functional.* It is designed in such a way that pupils are led to believe that they can achieve both the academic acquirements and a "decent self image." This means, for one thing, that teachers must build into the curriculum as many success experiences as possible. Premises upon which the course is built are these:

1. Although most communication of people who do not go to college is oral, not many of them will deliver a formal speech.
2. In most cases, writing will be limited to business and personal letters, filling out application and other forms, and compiling short reports for clubs, unions, and parent-teacher groups.
3. Because reading by noncollege adults is often restricted to newspapers, magazines, and other materials dealing with the popular arts, noncollege preparatory students need help in developing skills in: conversing; discussing; analyzing mass media (radio, television, newspapers, magazines, films, and comics); keeping up with current affairs; listening; organizing; and doing critical thinking including analysis of propaganda techniques, advertising appeals, and consumer buying.
4. The noncollege preparatory pupil learns better from the concrete than from the abstract.
5. Class assignments and materials should appeal to the interests and needs of these pupils and be wide-ranging in scope. Assignments are short, varied, and planned so that most work can be done in class.
6. Course materials and assignments should be planned in such a way that there will be many opportunities for each pupil to have successful experiences.

Material was developed so that teachers could utilize any of the following themes:

1. **Managing Time**
2. **Managing Money**
3. **Managing Personal Relations**
4. **Improving Personal Appearance**
5. **Building a Reputation**
6. **Being Popular**
7. **Choosing a Career**
8. **Working with Other People**
9. **Developing a Code To Live By**
10. **Dealing with Tensions, Frustrations, and Disappointments**
11. **Trusting People**
12. **Famous Personalities**
13. **Humor**

A one-semester trial with this course produced encouraging results. Failure and dropout were reduced; absence and tardiness were rare. Pupils "wanted" to come to school just to attend this one class. The number of books read in a 5-month period ranged from four to nine per student, and this was for a group of 10th-grade boys and girls with an average reading level of less than 6th grade. Each student wrote at least a paragraph a day in his journal. All talks were outlined with opening and closing paragraphs completely written. Other written assignments were done occasionally. Each pupil participated in at least three panel discussions and gave from four to five individual speeches.

Requests were received for a similar course in grade 11. Eight more schools introduced the 10th-grade course in the fall of 1962. The teachers, administrators, parents, and pupils who were involved were enthusiastic. Time will tell how lasting and effective such instruction has been.

## The DEEP Program

In 1960 Detroit received a grant from the Ford Foundation to conduct an experiment known as DEEP, the Detroit Experimental English Program.[2] It was originally intended for the above-average student, but it was felt that it might be beneficial for students in all school communities. Two of the experimental schools were located in so-called culturally different areas.

The plan for DEEP, briefly, is to have large reading rooms for 80 or more students and plenty of shelves loaded with books, both hard cover and paperback, varied in interest and reading level. The large group of students reads two days per week while the teacher takes small groups of 15 to 20 students into a nearby classroom for discussion and help. A lay-person, an English assistant, takes care of the clerical, library, and custodial details in the reading room. The fifth day of the week is spent doing programed exercises with the help of a lay-proctor or technician. Theme readers help the teacher correct compositions. The findings below have been especially heartening:

- Incomplete figures tend to show that DEEP youngsters of average and above-average ability tend to fail far less frequently than do average and above-average students in conventional classes. (DEEP, 10.4 percent; control, 22.0 percent)

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[2] Originally known as the Rutgers Plan. See Paul B. Diederich's "Readers, Aides, and Technicians," *Harvard Graduate School of Education Association Bulletin*, VI: 2-7, Spring, 1961.

- **Students read more books than they ever have before, (averaging 12 to 14), and some read as many as 27 in one semester.**
- **Students write more compositions, between 15 and 25, where formerly only 8 were expected.**
- **Student compositions improve greatly in quality, in the opinions of the teachers.**
- **Students are largely in favor of remaining in the program for 1 full year.**
- **Teachers are very enthusiastic about participating.**
- **Not one parent has raised an objection to the experiment.**

Ten high schools are now participating in the project. The figures quoted, while not uniform for all schools, are better than under the traditionally organized English programs, even in the schools attended by large numbers of culturally deprived students. The DEEP pattern of instruction has spread to other teachers in the English departments. They are becoming increasingly aware that the amount and quality of reading shows up in improved composition. More reading, more journal writing, and more small group and individual pupil conferences are producing better results.

## The Reading Improvement Program

In every discussion of language arts, the focal point seems to be the teaching of reading, and Detroit is no exception. Three years ago an extensive after-school, in-school, and summer school reading improvement program was begun. Although the in-school program is the more desirable, the shortage of teachers in all areas necessitated placing most of the remedial classes after school when extra teacher service could be made available.

The supervisor in charge of reading improvement organized one or more classes in each of the more than 300 public schools in the city. Thirty or more retired teachers were prevailed upon to return for 2 days a week to conduct all-day remedial reading classes in schools that had the greatest need. High schools set up reading clinics in every possible storeroom or closet. Instead of assigning an English teacher to hall duty, the English department head put him in charge of the reading clinic for his free period. Pupils came for help during their study periods. This is only a beginning and it is not enough, but we are reconciled to the fact that pupils with reading problems will be with us always and that the correction of these problems is a long-term project. Attendance at the reading improvement classes has produced good results. Pupils have gone back to their regular sections reading at grade level—in some instances higher.

Saturday and summer workshops have been organized to instruct language arts teachers in techniques for the teaching of reading. This program will continue. Emphasis throughout the school system is being put on the idea that every teacher is a teacher of reading. Since September of 1962 a half hour television program from 8:00 to 8:30 a.m. and over the noon hour has been offered for teachers of reading—and for teachers of any subject in which the pupils have to get information from the printed page.

## Summer Instruction

For the last two summers in culturally deprived areas, the school year has been extended with 4 additional weeks of free instruction in arithmetic and language arts for some elementary grades. The data collected from this experiment indicate that the experience was beneficial. The program, if funds permit, will be repeated and extended to other similar schools. For the past several years the summer school program has offered tutorial reading classes. The small tuition fee made such instruction available to most pupils throughout the city.

The activities discussed so far are all confined to part two of the Detroit Great Cities Project: the improved use of instructional equipment and materials, and the development of educational materials adapted to the needs of the child with limited backgrounds. There are five parts to the program, and in the final evaluation it may be difficult to say which of the five parts is the most effective. Good performance in the area of communication skills is so dependent on emotional climate, motivation, and aspiration that a direct approach to the improvement of a language arts skill may produce only frustration—for teacher and pupil. Teachers of remedial reading classes have long been familiar with the need and the advisability of removing emotional blocks before discussing specific reading difficulties.

## Other Aspects of Improvement in English Skills

Since the other four parts of the program are contributing to improvement in English skills, a brief description of and due credit should be given to them.

*Part one* is concerned with teacher orientation and training. Most teachers in inner city schools bring to their work an experiential background entirely different from that of the families whose children they teach. Appropriate changes in teacher perception must occur to insure reasonably objective reactions to child, family, and neighborhood. These important changes in the perception of teachers occur only as teachers become aware of and are involved in the processes of change which confront children and their families day by day.

The workshop is an effective inservice training tool for providing teachers with useful knowledge in teaching the child with limited background. The Detroit project has used the workshop to outline the extraordinary needs of the child with limited background and to present outstanding consultants in child psychology, sociology, urban renewal, and in-migration.

A monthly paper, the Great Cities School Improvement Program *Footnotes*, is distributed to all staff members in the seven project schools. It keeps the staff informed of activities in other GCSIP schools, and provides an outlet for articles and materials pertinent to a greater understanding of the child with limited background and his environment.

*Part two* of the program has already been described.

*Part three* concerns modification of organizational patterns within the school for more flexible and efficient programing to meet individual needs. Team teaching is being tried in three schools with considerable success. Block-time programing, using study units developed by teachers, has been initiated in two junior high schools. A nongraded primary unit has been in operation in one school for 2 years, and testing of child progress shows highly satisfactory results. Another school instituted a nongraded primary program in September 1961, and has extended teacher-pupil continuity to six semesters with many of its elementary class groups.

A preschool program, begun in one school to discover whether early preparation could offset some of the lacks of the child with limited background, now has "graduates" in the primary grades who are, in most cases, well ahead of peers who had no preschool experience. Whether that headstart will be retained or lost along the way remains to be seen.

One of the most obvious, and perhaps most successful, ways to enrich and expand the background of the child is to put him on a bus and take him to places he has never been and perhaps of which he has never heard. Approximately 400 bus trips to industry, business, and cultural centers were provided the seven schools in 1960–61.

Camping experiences are an expanding activity in the project schools. There are numerous reasons for sending the child with limited background off to the fields and the woods for a few days. Since the teacher is often the only available source of the sort of objective affection and acceptance which the child needs most, a camping experience may be the keystone upon which a child's success in school can be built. After such an experience, the pupils have something firsthand to talk and write about.

*Part four* concerns the additional staff assigned to each school to help classroom teachers and school administrators coordinate home-community, agency, and school resources, and to increase remedial teaching and referral capacity. A full-time director with adequate clerical help is in charge of the project. Coaching teachers (one per school) have enhanced the work of regular teachers with diagnostic and developmental work in language arts and arithmetic. They have helped approximately 350 children whose disabilities required extensive remedial instruction. These specialists often find that their first task is to develop confidence and motivation in children to whom schoolwork of any kind has been synonomous with defeat and failure. Full-time visiting teachers (one per school) diagnose and refer emotionally disturbed children and their families to appropriate agencies and specialists for help. As staff members working nearly fulltime, they are able to identify with other teachers and with families and children in ways which were not possible when they were responsible for many schools.

The school-community agent (one in each elementary school, two in each of the junior and senior high schools) is essentially a social worker trained in community organization. The agent is responsible for implementing the ideal of the community or neighborhood school, serving children, parents, and interested neighbors alike. Agents utilize staff and laymen as after-school and evening instructors and leaders on both a voluntary and paid basis. The agents work with the staff in developing a comprehensive enrichment-remedial-recreational summer program. They coordinate the work of community agencies in the school, and develop and renew in appropriate ways community leadership and interest in and use of the school. Informally, the agent is an impartial arbiter of school-family issues, the go-between and open forum for neighborhood opinion.

*Part five* concerns public and private agency involvement and the development of school-home-community reinforcement activities. The success of a community-school venture in a culturally deprived area depends in large measure on the concentration of public and private agency resources and personnel on community-school needs. Activities in 1960–61 included:

- **A day camp for 55 emotionally disturbed children**
- **Extensive use of YMCA and YWCA facilities and programs**
- **Expanded use of public libraries, including bookmobiles**
- **Cooperation wi the Detroit Department of Health and the Pilot Club of Detroit to staff and operate a health clinic**
- **Use of nearly 200 high school and college students as teachers' assistants and club leaders**
- **Project staff speeches on the child with limited background and needs of the school to 220 professional and lay groups in and around Detroit**

What are the chances for the success of the Detroit Great Cities Project? How will success be measured? All evaluation falls into one of two dimensions. The first is the educational record based upon a battery of tests measuring change in academic achievement and ability and, to some extent, attitude toward school. Increased test performance indicates application in studies and, probably, a better attitude toward school.

The second dimension is that of sociological measurement and research. Sophisticated instruments have been developed and used to assess the attitudes and perception of teachers, impact of attitudes and perception on teaching style, and effect of teaching style on the school success of the child with limited background. The project staff is working with the School of Social Work at the University of Michigan to study family types and neighborhood structure, and to analyze administrative style and its effect upon the innovative quality so essential in a good teacher.

What are the "short term" forecasts for the Great Cities Project in Detroit? It is believed that a considerably larger number of children attending project schools will leave with positive self-images, higher goals, greater scholastic achievement and improved citizenship, more adequately prepared for continuing school or going to work as independent rather than dependent citizens. Increased competence in the use of the English language will help make them so!

# The Philadelphia Reading Program for Disadvantaged Youth

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WHAT IS it like to be a "disadvantaged youth"? How many teachers and supervisors know or have taken the time to try to find out what it is *really* like to be a person from the kind of home and community in which disadvantaged youth find themselves? Could some of our limited success in teaching be the result of our failure to understand their problems and concerns?

It has been said that the teacher of underprivileged children in large cities today must be first of all a humanitarian in the broadest sense of that term. He must be pricked by a social conscience which will give him no rest until he has found better answers to teaching these children than he might have learned in college or read in a textbook. He must be sophisticated enough to deal with young adults whose language and actions can be shocking, and yet he must be naive enough to remain hopeful that he can get through that tough outer shell to the inner person. He must above all not think of himself as a "disadvantaged teacher" because he is assigned to a school in a slum neighborhood. This growing phenomenon of so-called "disadvantaged teachers" in our large city school systems presents a problem which must be faced and solved if we are ever to find answers to the problems involved in the assignment of teachers to schools where they can succeed. Whatever of value I have to bring to my present job of directing the reading program in the Philadelphia schools is distilled from experiences in teaching disadvantaged youth at all three levels of the school system and of helping other teachers to do a similar job. And this is our job to do since the workable answers will be found by those in daily contact with the children, their families, and the community.

This paper began with a question. I propose to answer it by means of the following questions which have a direct relationship to the kind of reading program that must be planned for these children:

1. What is it like never to hear standard English spoken in your home or community?

2. What is it like never to have had a newspaper, book, or magazine in your home?

3. What is it like never to have seen anyone in your home write anything?

4. What is it like never to have had anyone tell you a story or read to you when you were little?

5. What is it like never to have had anyone speak to you except in terms of abuse?

6. What is it like never to have had anyone listen to you tell "what you did in school today."

7. What is it like never to have traveled more than a few blocks from your home?

8. What is it like to go to a different elementary school every few months as you move from one room or home to another a few blocks away?

9. What is it like to be hungry most of the time, to feel tired and sleepy in school, and not know why?

10. What is it like to have no one to see that you get to school every day?

11. What is it like *never* to have known a kind adult?

One of the obvious conclusions that emerges from a consideration of this strange litany is that the sooner we discard the term "reading program" and begin to think of a "language program," the closer we will be to the realities of the situation and to some signposts pointing to a possible solution to the problem. Speaking, reading, and writing *cannot* be taught effectively in the same way to children of highly literate parents and to children of completely illiterate or semiliterate parents. The myth of the same basic reading materials for all children must be exploded. Teachers should not take seriously a claim such as that of one publisher who fatuously states in a teacher's manual that "poorer children readily associate with the happy family in our stories."

In the Philadelphia public schools the language program for underprivileged children is in its beginning stages. In a city the size of Philadelphia, the extent of a new educational program is determined by the speed with which two tremendous tasks can be accomplished, namely, inservice education of teachers and improvement of basic materials. Since the emphasis in the years ahead is to be on a preventive program in speech, reading, and writing in an attempt to forestall the present appalling retardation in these areas among our disadvantaged children, our immediate work is with the teachers of the primary grades. The school district as a whole embarked in 1962 upon a project which holds great promise for improvement in the teaching of language and reading. This is known in Philadelphia as the continuous progress primary or, in other school systems, as the ungraded primary. While it is intended, of course, to benefit all children, the following aspects have particular significance for pupils from culturally deprived backgrounds:

1. Focusing of attention upon the primary reading program, particularly in those schools which have not been successful in the past in reaching all children.
2. Grouping of children on the bases of intellectual, social, and physical maturity, resulting in classes with which even inexperienced or substitute teachers can work more effectively.
3. Recognizing the tremendous importance of the pupil's first year in determining his future success in reading and writing.
4. Recognizing, also, the fact that some children will have 4 rather than 3 years in the primary unit before going on to the intermediate grade cycle.
5. Utilizing a new report card based on levels of reading and arithmetic to help parents of limited background understand the nature of their children's progress.
6. Providing inservice education for teachers by means of district meetings, increased number of school faculty meetings, new curriculum guides, and a television series in the field of beginning reading.

Accompanying this new organization of primary grades is a development which may prove to be of great significance in improving the language skills of disadvantaged children. This, briefly, is the determination to make full use, beginning with grade one, of the findings and research of structural linguists in the fields of language and reading. The possibilities offered by linguistic research in improving the teaching of the language skills of all children, but especially the culturally handicapped pupils, are boundless. However, it would be misleading to give the impression that all or even a majority of the elementary principals or teachers in our system are in agreement at this time on the importance of this subject.

Let us consider the "why" of our program before moving to a description of it. Again I shall begin by posing a few questions. Do you know what a "looflook notebook" is? Would you consider it praise or censure if a student said of you, "I dig what he handing out?" What would you say to the child who told you that he knew the meaning of the word "sue"—"it's like a "sue" (soup) spoon you use to eat with." Confronted with these and hundreds of other nonstandard pronunciations and speech patterns of our culturally disadvantaged youth, is it any wonder that I think the linguistic approach to our problem is "like real cool," to quote a young friend of mine? In fact, to attempt to bring about changes for the better in the speech, reading, and writing of the children and youth described above *without* using every possible resource made available to us by the linguists would be not only foolish but also tragic.

Our school system is engaged in the education of principals and teachers who have little or no background in this field and in providing pupils with reading materials based on linguistic principles. A start was made on this project in September 1961 with the establishment of an experimental first grade group in a school in an underprivileged community. Disregarding traditional materials, the children used linguistically oriented books. Though it was not a carefully controlled experiment, the results to date have been most satisfactory and have been encouraging enough to expand the program next year. In cooperation with the Curriculum Office, our Division of Educational Research is setting up a scientifically controlled experiment in the first grades of a number of elementary schools. The purpose of this experiment will be to compare several approaches to the teaching of beginning reading, particularly the traditional basic reader technique, and that based upon the linguistic research reported in the recently published Bloomfield-Barnhart book, *Let's Read.*[1]

In addition, a study group of elementary principals has been formed for inservice education and as a clearinghouse for the reports on the experimentation in progress next year. All of those involved will be particularly interested in the results of the new approach with the children from very underprivileged areas.

Some of the confidence which I feel concerning the outcome of this work in beginning reading is based upon the definite success with linguistic materials in the remedial reading programs of our secondary schools. All remedial reading teachers in both junior and senior high schools are now using the Bloomfield word lists as the "phonics" aspect of their programs.

Teachers and students alike are engaged in an all-out creative effort of writing their own materials. We have found that there are various benefits to be derived from this project. Results in several classes in schools in poor neighborhoods which have been engaged in this project for several terms are spectacular from the standpoint of increased student interest as well as improved reading ability. Children who arrived at the secondary level completely discouraged and confused about their reading and writing failures have literally taken a new lease on life with the realization that there is patterning and logical development in the words and sentences of their language. What has seemed to them a hopeless morass of unrelated sight words, which they could never hope to remember, suddenly is cut to a size they can handle by the introduction of a logical, systematic approach to language. When, at the same time, their teachers begin to talk frankly to them about their own pronunciation and speech in relation to standard English, about regional dialects both city and national, and the relationship of sound to spelling or, as the linguists say, of phonemic structure to orthography, we feel that we are moving ahead.

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[1] Leonard Bloomfield and Clarence L. Barnhart, *Let's Read.* Detroit: Wayne University Press, 1961.

Another aspect of this problem and one which has probably discouraged more teachers of disadvantaged youth than any other is that of general motivation in relation to all school work as well as specific motivation in relation to reading and writing. It was proved to me rather grimly during a recent visit to one high school in a culturally deprived area by a teacher who told of a comment made by a girl in her class. Following an informal evaluation of their work in remedial reading, this student seemed to feel that she had gained little. Detained a few minutes after class, the girl commented to her teacher, "It ain't your fault, Mrs. Smith. You can't make me learn if I don't want to learn." How true and how tragic! Such a statement is enough to make any teacher stop and ask herself, "Where do we go from here?"

The answer to the last question is dependent upon the teacher's or administrator's ability to accept the fact that, while there will always be a few students who will not be reached despite heroic efforts or circumstances beyond the control of the school, experience has shown that hundreds of children and young people have acquired the will to learn through our efforts. Surely the demonstrated success of the Great Cities Project supported, in part, by grants from the Ford Foundation in involving the parents and the community is a giant step in this direction. Motivation to learn is not "a sometime thing," as Porgy would say, but is, instead, a full-time, lifetime desire to improve, to raise one's sights, to become, in short, an educated person. If we must begin at the prekindergarten stage as the experiments in Chicago and Detroit are proving, then that is what the future holds for all of us working with disadvantaged youth in the great cities.

In Philadelphia we begin in kindergarten and continue increasingly through the primary grades to provide an environment in our classrooms which will substitute for the book-filled homes from which more favored children come. We used to campaign in our city for "flowers for the flowerless"; now our slogan in the schools is "books for the bookless." In schools with many underprivileged children, efforts are made to provide attractive classroom libraries of beautiful trade books to attract pupils to the wonderful world of books. Since school district funds for this purpose are limited, all kinds of fund-raising projects are encouraged to secure the money needed for purchase of exciting, worthwhile books.

Undoubtedly the most successful as well as the most fitting activity for this purpose is a Book Fair. A few years ago the enterprising vice principal of a junior high school in one of our poorest neighborhoods conceived the idea of a community book sale. Assisted by other members of the faculty as well as a few enthusiastic parents, he assembled in a conveniently vacant room in the school an amazing collection of paperback books on consignment from various distributors in the city. The assortment contained everything from comic books of the better type to paperbound dictionaries, homemaking books, cookbooks, books on hobbies, and adult fiction and biography. The response from parents and children alike was overwhelming. The Book Fair was crowded by day with classes brought by their teachers to browse and to buy. At night parents and neighboring residents also came to browse and to buy. By the end of the week the amazing total of 400 paperback books had been purchased by men and women and boys and girls from an area with fewer books per square inch than almost any other section of the city. Given a suitable time and place and a price they could afford, those attending the Book Fair proved conclusively that the will to learn exists in the inhabitants of the most deprived community.

Related to motivation and to the reading program is another project which is just getting underway in Philadelphia. It is so new that it is as yet untitled. It all began one day last fall with the visit of two prominent Philadelphia women to the office of our curriculum superintendent. They came to offer their services as volunteers to the schools of our city, work in the field of reading if at all possible, and work in schools in underprivileged areas. They were sincere, deeply interested, and willing to devote time and effort to inservice education. By the time a course in the spring term had been arranged for them, their number had grown to eight college-educated women eager to begin the training which would enable them to help in the reading program at the elementary level next year. They are now receiving specific instruction in new approaches to the teaching of beginning reading with our most underprivileged children in the primary grades. Under the direction of our supervisor of elementary reading, these volunteers will work with two or three of the almost inarticulate children outside the regular classroom situation. In addition to the help which they will give in an almost individualized teaching or tutoring situation, they will be securing some necessary information regarding the readiness of these children in relation to speech, vocabulary, and experiential background. Apart from this aspect of their work, the children undoubtedly will benefit from their contact with a kind, interested, and sympathetic adult.

In this article I have tried to describe approaches we are taking to improve the education of our culturally disadvantaged youth. In addition, I should like to mention other services which are an integral part of the Philadelphia reading program. Those which have a definite connection with the problems of our underprivileged pupils are the following:

1. Reading adjustment and remedial reading classes of our elementary and secondary schools are an indispensable part of the program for disadvantaged youth at the present time. No matter how effective a preventive program we develop in the years ahead, there will always remain a need for specially trained reading teachers to assist and train classroom teachers and to care for the children whose needs cannot be met in the large class situation.

2. The Philadelphia Public Schools Reading Clinic through its testing and teaching services identifies and releases the potential that lies hidden or dormant in many of these disadvantaged children.

3. The developmental reading program is required by State mandate in Pennsylvania for every boy and girl in grades seven and eight. Under this program the direct teaching of reading skills to every pupil at his correct instructional level is of tremendous value, particularly to those from the poorer neighborhoods.

4. The continuing inservice education of teachers by means of citywide and district courses in the fall and spring, the Philadelphia Public Schools Summer Workshop which offers credit courses approved by both Temple and the University of Pennsylvania, and the television courses given over the educational channel are most valuable in upgrading teacher competencies.

5. Of particular help to teachers are the curriculum guides such as "The Key to Teaching Slow Learners in the High School" and "A Guide to the Teaching of English, Adapted Course." In

addition, teachers use our regular guides in reading entitled "Developmental Reading, Grades Seven, Eight, and Nine," "The Developmental Reading Lesson in the Elementary School," "Word Recognition," "Expressive Phases of the Language Arts," "Phonics Inventory," and others.

Despite these efforts, the recurrent nightmare of the public school administrator and supervisor in the big cities across the Nation is the fact that we have not yet found the answers to the problems posed by Dr. James B. Conant in *Slums and Suburbs*, by Dan Schreiber in his study of dropouts, by Finis Engleman's "Some Priorities in Public Education," in the *AAUW Journal*, March, 1962, or by the *Saturday Evening Post* in the articles telling us that "We Waste a Million Kids a Year." At the base of much of the failure and frustration of these boys and girls in later years is their initial failure to learn to read and write. The common denominator in this picture is definitely failure in school which has its origin in reading retardation or failure.

Actually, there is no one, whether he lives in a big city or small community, who can afford to ignore this and other educational problems of urban centers. While there is heartening evidence in the various Great Cities Projects of the interest and financial support of educational foundations, their help is limited at the present time. Therefore, we must involve superior teachers with new ideas and new methods of teaching reading and other language skills, methods which they understand, accept tentatively, and then put into practice in their classrooms.

Through the past 30 or more years of American public education, excellence became the forgotten word while the "open door" was made the prevailing symbol. Despite the "open door" concept, many children were not offered true equality of opportunity because, behind the "open door," the shelves were often bare.

In closing, I should like to quote a few sentences from Fred Hechinger's book, *The Big Red Schoolhouse*, in which he says, "In America they proclaimed the unheard of ideal: equal educational opportunity for all children. It was a revolution intended to open the doors of intellectual excellence to all who cared to enter." This revolution has yet to be achieved for the culturally disadvantaged youth.

# Ways To Develop Reading Skills and Interests of Culturally Different Youth in Large Cities

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WHEN ASSIGNED the subject of developing reading skills among culturally different youth in large cities, one wishes he could invent a miraculous new formula to make the teaching of these skills a pleasant and profitable activity in the schools. Unfortunately, the mastering of the complex and elusive skills of absorbing meanings from textbook pages by children whose social milieu in large cities does not encourage this art becomes for them a tedious chore. We can therefore profitably review certain standard devices for the improvement of reading programs which will always be useful when prosecuted vigorously and constantly.

## The Readiness Problem

There is evident a certain impatience in some quarters with traditional applications of the developed principles of reading readiness. There is some opinion that pupils will learn to read more readily if a formal and almost exclusively phonetic reading program is begun earlier, perhaps in the kindergarten, and that much readiness activity is only an aimless waste of time. Although it is doubtless true that some traditional readiness programs included occasional nonsense, there is no question but that reading, writing, and spelling are, essentially, artificial and derived aspects of oral language. Pupils can be inducted into these more artificial forms of communication only after they have mastered a useful oral vocabulary. The structural linguists tell us that the basic elements of intonation—stress, pitch, and juncture—and syntax are well mastered, if subconsciously, before children come to school. However, among typical preschool youngsters in underprivileged areas in the large cities, this observation simply does not hold. Notoriously, oral language of these children is probably the greatest single handicapping factor in the critically important business of a successful initial reading experience. To throw overboard the brutal facts of life which we have painfully learned about the readiness factors in reading over the past few decades would indeed be folly.

Experience in the large city schools shows conclusively that the great majority of these children have extremely limited conventional vocabularies, that they do not speak readily in the sentence patterns of children from more favorable environments, and that a typical basal reading readiness program sometimes requires three to four times as much time as is expected for the mythically "average" child. Obviously, these oral language limitations are reflections of the meagre and limited experiences of the children.

Anyone who considers the problem naturally assumes that it would be helpful to establish nursery schools for slum children at early ages, and that the major burden of such schools should be the development of backgrounds of experience which would in turn foster the growth of oral communication skills, essential prerequisites to the meaningful use of books. A sound kindergarten program, with essentially similar objectives, in smaller than normal group numbers, would strengthen and buttress such instruction. Now all this has been said before and said often, but it is equally true that the persistent application of these principles on a broad scale for those children who need it most has not been a distinguishing feature of our school reading programs.

## Ungraded Primary Programs

When children with thin oral language preparation are introduced to formal primary reading programs in large groups, the chances for successful, sequential growth in reading skills are not promising for a large segment of the culturally different children. The very structure of the traditional graded school system presents a discouraging and unyielding facade. The philosophy of the graded school rests on the premise that one can identify a sequential cluster of reading skills which almost all children can master within a specified period of time. Now, it is quite realistic and practicable to identify the total sequence of basic reading skills from the most rudimentary and bumbling stage to that which requires the ultimate in facile perception and appreciation. But one must be most optimistic to expect that masses of pupils can be guided through this maze of complex skills at approximately the same rate by teachers who vary as widely in their range of teaching skill as the pupils vary in learning capacity.

Theoretically, the basic reading skills have to be achieved by pupils before they enter grade four in American schools. During the primary grades most attention is directed to a mastery of word perception skills through the use of narrative which recounts more or less typical incidents in the lives of middle-class suburban children. In grade four the reading material in the textbooks becomes predominantly expository, the vocabulary expands in the various curricular areas, and the child who has been struggling through the primary grade materials on the strength of some partially memorized sight vocabulary sees little purpose in laboriously trying to extract information from textbooks which he does not relate to any of his needs or interests. The streets and alleys, the poolrooms and taverns have a more alluring curriculum for him.

The arbitrary division of the sequence of basic primary reading skills into three annual graded segments is obviously incongruent with respect to the rates at which human beings learn any set of skills. Those who make our reading materials do, of course, with varying degrees of skill and wisdom, begin with the identification of the skills which must be mastered. They then create reading material calculated to develop those skills. That there are clearly discernible stages or clusters of skill in a typical first-grade program is quite apparent if from nothing else than the physical facts of bookmaking: there is, typically, a separate readiness book—or two; separate preprimers—one, two, or usually three; a primer; and a first reader. Indeed, it would be most miraculous if one cluster of skills could be mastered by almost all pupils within a period of 180 to 200 school days.

Teachers who are poorly prepared to teach reading—and there is compelling evidence that many are—easily confuse the teaching of reading skills with the exposing of children to reading material. Thus, using a basal reading series, it is not uncommon practice for teachers to cover the pages of the readiness book in from 3 to 6 weeks, to hasten coveys of bluebirds, robins, and crows through the preprimers, primers, and first readers so that the "first year" reading program will be completed by the time the summer vacation begins.

Individual differences in learning rates are commonly bowed to by exposing the faster learners to more preprimers, primers, and first readers and by a token adjustment of reading materials to the child, e.g., the slow third-grade child reads from a preprimer.

The deceptive element in this kind of program is the fact that almost all children, when exposed to printed materials often enough, can pick up varying amounts of sight vocabulary without developing real word perception skills. Exposure to prefabricated reading materials designed for "average" conforming suburban children does not guarantee transmission of that basic tool of adjustment to traditional classrooms—the knack of deriving meanings and information from textbooks. As the slum child moves through the graded segments of growth which were never designed for him, his interest, if any, oozes away; and when the compulsory attendance laws no longer restrict his freedom, he escapes from his "concentration camp" and helps form the social dynamite in the jungles of our big cities, as Dr. Conant has pointed out to an all too indifferent American public.

There has been much superficial prattling about the ungraded primary school, the pedagogical machinery designed to remedy some of the factors in this situation, but there is no time now to discuss at any length its philosophy, its virtues, and its common misapplications. The rudimentary facts are these: If we have learned anything at all during these many years of teaching, we can certainly identify the stages or clusters of reading skills which will enable a child to learn from books. We also know that children differ widely—not only in the application of these skills, but also in the *rate* at which they can acquire them. Does it not then stand to reason that we should clearly set forth these stages in terms of skills, the mastery of which must be the true objectives of our teaching, and not in terms of the materials to which children are to be exposed? Must we not also have available all the objective means we can develop to measure the presence or absence of these skills in children, rather than the measures of a sight vocabulary which has accidentally stuck with children and which can be used most disarmingly in suburban school systems to inform the PTA that "we are four months above the national norm"? Must we not, then, move children from one stage of growth to another only after we have real evidence that the skills of the earlier level have been acquired? Must we not move thus in the progression of our teaching and learning without regard for the time which is necessary to do the job, whether it coincides with the semester units or the calendar or not? And must we not exert every effort and exhaust every administrative device to achieve these basic reading skills before we move the children into the first year of secondary education in the American school system? No administrative device, certainly, will automatically improve the efficiency of reading instruction; the ungraded primary school does, however, make improvement more readily possible and appears to be a particularly promising measure for the primary school populations of the large cities.

## Other Administrative Devices To Improve Reading Instruction

### Rooms of Twenty

No matter how meticulously we plan and execute an ungraded primary program designed to move children carefully from one stage of growth in skills to another, we shall have failures for a variety of reasons. In St. Louis another device has been employed in our effort to send into the fourth grade as few pupils as possible who are unable to work independently with textbooks. As a result, over the years thousands of pupils have been prevented from becoming reading clinic cases. For many years the pupil-teacher ratio has been 35. When pupils have spent 2½ or 3 years in the ungraded primary and have shown that they are still far from reaching the top level, they have been organized into groups of 20 and assigned to a clinic-trained teacher. The teacher is freed from the regular time-allotment schedule and is given the job of bringing her group through the top primary level in reading, language, spelling, handwriting, and arithmetic in one semester, or, at the most, two semesters.

Pupils of these teachers have consistently made twice the normal progress, as measured by standardized tests in these curricular areas. Teachers usually move 10 pupils out in one semester, but need a second semester for the other 10. Normally, from 20 to 60 such units are in operation each school year. With the right teacher and the right materials, this program has proved most useful in the slum areas of the city.

### Reading Clinics

When a city school system has a strong classroom reading program and makes other provisions for mentally retarded pupils, a clinic staff with the services of a doctor, a nurse, clerical help, and 4 full-time teachers can service elementary schools with a population of about 15,000 pupils.

The St. Louis Public Schools maintain five such reading clinics, each of which provides diagnosis and remedial teaching for the schools of the district. Principals receive diagnostic service for their pupils upon request and are furnished remedial teaching for their more severe cases. Pupils continue to attend their home schools, and report for 2, 3, or 5 days of individualized instruction for 45-minute periods. Except in unusual cases primary school pupils are not given clinic service, but principals try to identify pupils who will need clinic help as soon as possible after they enter the fourth grade. Each year of delay in providing attention to severe reading problems which cannot be effectively dealt with in the classroom makes the problem more difficult to solve and alienates the child further from the school program.

In St. Louis we have used the reading clinics as teacher training centers which feed back into the schools dozens of teachers with realistic clinic experience. One teacher is permanently in charge in each of the five clinics, but each year three regular classroom teachers are assigned to each clinic for a year of training in diagnostic and remedial procedures. After the year of training, these teachers are reassigned to the schools, some as remedial reading teachers, some as teachers of "Rooms of Twenty," some as regular classroom teachers. Although such a system impairs the efficiency of the clinic operation to some extent, it does, in a large city system, return to the classrooms people who have the skill and experience to deal effectively with the problems which are typical of the culturally different children. At any rate, it seems quite clear that the big city school systems will always have enough deviate cases which cannot be dealt with effectively in a classroom situation to justify the kind of service which is offered by reading clinics.

## Reading Materials

### Basal Readers

There has recently been much criticism of the basal reading series which we commonly use in American schools to teach reading skills. Some of these criticisms have validity, but others show quite clearly a naive unfamiliarity with some of the problems of reading instruction and a tendency to oversimplify the problems. First of all, the use of a single set of basic reading materials in a large city system has much to commend it. The mobility of the pupils in the underprivileged areas of the big cities is extremely high. Some schools have practically a complete turnover of pupil population within 1 school year, and thousands of pupils attend four, five, or more different schools during the primary school years. Unless these schools use common reading materials, and unless there is a transmission of pupil records —a strong feature of an ungraded primary program, pupils and teachers face a frustrating situation in trying to continue the sequential development of reading skills. Secondly, a strong program of reading instruction in the large cities with a high teacher turnover rate makes continuing inservice programs mandatory; and inservice work can be much more specific, direct, and realistic when a common body of materials is in use. Third, the teacher guides of the basal series, although they have grown extremely voluminous, have probably saved many a beginning teacher from hopeless confusion and discouragement and many a beginning pupil from failure.

The popularly used basal reading series, contrary to the cursory observations of critics who have not taught beginning reading do have more or less systematic programs of word perception skills. They are not evident in the pupils' books and this gives partly informed critics the impression that the basic word perception device is still "look-pray-and-say." However, the word perception program is cautiously and gingerly paced throughout the 3-year program. This caution results from the revolt against the highly mechanistic phonics programs which were jammed into the first-year programs of reading series several decades ago, which, incidentally, most nonteaching critics now offer as a newly discovered solution to all of our reading problems. This cautious pacing—for example, the excessive delay in teaching vowel sounds—distributes the word perception program over so long a period that pupils often fail to perceive the relationships of the parts. It also places the program into the hands of so many different teachers that sequential skill growth on the part of the pupils becomes very difficult to achieve. A return to an isolated, mechanistic phonetic program consisting essentially of tedious and repetitious drill, divorced from interesting and stimulating reading material, gives little promise of solving our problems. We do need different reading material for the culturally different child in the big city. One of its characteristics should be a simplified, closely paced word perception program which will make pupils independent in the word perception skills more quickly than at present.

The content of the basal readers is another matter. Naturally enough, the current story characters, their pets, and the family helpers constitute efforts to base reading material on the experience of "typical" 6-, 7-, and 8-year-olds on the thesis that such material will be more meaningful than the fanciful or moralistic content of the earlier readers. That a child in the slum districts finds the basal reading story characters difficult to identify himself with goes without saying. Some publishers are usually reluctant to bring out reading material for which there is no national market, and the current investment necessary to issue a basal reading series with its attendant paraphernalia may continue to give them cause for concern. Some of the minority group educators may also resist any attempts to produce reading material designed specifically for culturally different children.

This problem of educating culturally different pupils in the large cities, has, however, become so serious that some effort should be made to produce reading content which is more closely geared to the experiences of such children. The word perception programs should be more compact and aggressive, and there should be more simple expository content, in contrast to the present narrative. The teachers' guides should be simplified and curtailed, and much of the pedagogical jargon replaced with incisive, explicit English.

### Remedial Reading Materials

Because many culturally different pupils are retarded in grade placement, there is great value in some of the reading material which has been developed for remedial programs. The essential characteristic of such material is that its interest level is more than customarily mature with respect to the reading difficulty. Thus, older pupils who have primary level reading skills can be motivated to read without laboring excessively over material in which they can find no interest.

### Library

In the Banneker school district, where administrators and teachers have been carrying on an aggressive campaign to raise the achievement levels of culturally different pupils, successful efforts have been made to extend the reading experiences of children beyond the classroom. Pupils have the usual required outside reading lists at each grade level and are provided with classroom libraries, largely because of a lack of building space for central libraries and insufficient funds under the current budget to employ elementary school librarians.

The school principals have conducted an active campaign of education so that parents understand the importance of recreational reading and the school reading requirements. The public library has arranged a schedule for each of the schools to use the neighborhood branches and the bookmobiles. The librarians and teachers have a system of communication so that the children can get books at the proper reading level. Practically all the pupils in the district have library cards, and the library circulation figures are far higher than they ever have been before. When the city schools establish a sound and effective instructional program, it can profitably be supplemented by an equally vigorous supplementary or recreational reading program. Cooperation with the public librarians is usually not difficult to arrange, and the large cities probably have the best public library facilities available anywhere.

Central libraries in the elementary schools can do much to support and strengthen the classroom programs if enough money is spent to get a really adequate supply of books and to provide librarians. If this is not done, the already overburdened classroom teachers usually have to take on the additional chores. Judicious book selection to fit the needs of the pupils of the community can make the school libraries highly useful in promoting a love for books and for reading.

## Motivation: The Vital Ingredient

The educational situation we face in many areas of the large city school systems requires no elaboration. Our schools are textbook schools which attempt to transmit the cultural knowledge, attitudes, and skills of our civilization largely through the curiously artificial skill of drawing meanings from printed symbols. As mechanization of industry accelerates and as ever-increasing thousands of children huddle in the big city slums and housing projects, the need for the kind of school education our social and industrial civilization rewards can only grow greater. Before we conclude that a great segment of youth is unable to conform to the school regimen and curriculum, and that we must devise a totally new program of education to occupy these youth or to keep them off the streets, we had better make an all-out effort to make our current program succeed. There is some evidence to indicate that we can do much better than we have done in the past.

First, all of us who are engaged in this task need to face reality more fearlessly and honestly than we sometimes do. We are all now deeply concerned about this problem, largely because of fear—fear of the threat to our own security and comfort. It was not very many years ago that relatively few educators really cared whether the minority and culturally different children in the schools succeeded in getting the kind of education necessary to survive in our society, and all too many who were directly concerned with the problem considered the environmental influences too formidable to overcome in the classroom.

But changes are taking place. Dr. Samuel Shepard, director of the Banneker project in St. Louis, has tried, first of all, to induce the principals and teachers in his district to face up to the cruel fact that the academic achievement of the pupils was disgracefully low. He used objective measures of skill, with all of their admitted imperfections. He made graphic pictures of the results and made no secret of them. He takes the position that group intelligence test results are inaccurate because of their environmental loading and that a child's limitations in academic learning are determined only by his drive and determination. His principals and teachers have succeeded, semester by semester, in improving their pupils' achievement scores until they are currently respectable according to national norms. The principals and teachers are proud of their results, and they take pride in their work.

Secondly, he directed his efforts to getting parents to understand the relationship between formal education and the number of dollars one brings home in his pay envelope. He and his staff prepared a series of simple informative charts showing the facts of economic life. The principals urged parents to come to the schools. Dr. Shepard and his staff went, night after night, to every school in his district to tell the parents their story. The staff members explained how school achievement is measured, and they showed the parents just where their children ranked. They explained the importance of reading and how it affects performance in the other curricular areas. They talked about the importance of school attendance and homework; how parents can help the schools—to get the children off the streets, to provide a place to read and study, to turn off the television and the radio during study periods. They prepared a homework notebook, explained its use, and requested the parents to sign it each week. They distributed a parents' pledge of cooperation, a checklist for parents to follow. They have gone back again and again to report progress and to keep the parents working at their job.

Finally, they have told the same story to their students. They have arranged field trips to see people at work, to learn the educational requirements for the better jobs. They have tried to get them to places of cultural interest in the city, to expand their outlook and environment. Each semester they have visited each school to honor the children who have achieved well and those who have made the best gains. There is considerable evidence that these children see opportunities for themselves in the years ahead, and that they are beginning to understand the relationship of what they do in school to the kinds of lives they may lead.

Now these are not new educational inventions. This is not a new educational plan. These are determined and aggressive efforts to get a community and a people to change their attitudes and habits to conform to a completely new set of standards, to convince them that they are going to get a "fair shake" and that they had better be ready to make use of it. We have the answers to many of our problems. To overcome them we need only to apply what we do know—through the medium of dedicated, consecrated teachers with a great cause: To inspire children to make the very best of themselves as they face their world of the future.

# The Houston Program for Potential Dropouts

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Houston Independent School District
Houston, Tex.

THE POSTWAR prosperity which Houston has enjoyed has been responsible for many improvements and rapid changes. As the city limits have extended farther and farther in every direction, the construction of expressways has facilitated commuting and increased the attractiveness of suburban living. The increase in earning power has enabled many who were formerly dependent upon the apartment unit for housing to become suburban home owners. Yet as the skyline has been dramatically altered by innumerable masterpieces of modern architecture and engineering, within their very shadow insidiously there has also been developing the antithesis of man's advancement, the urban area of the disadvantaged. Remaining behind in the exodus are the nonskilled workers, the common laborers, the unemployed, those who have not been able to find their niche in the city's affluent society. The magnet for this "social dynamite" in the congested urban area is cheap rent. There its residents are hopelessly imprisoned by their limited ability to come to grips with their bewildering economic and social problems.

Adults who are discouraged by their self-image of failure are too frustrated by illiteracy and poverty to comprehend the critical needs of their children for higher education. They can neither perceive nor accept the fact that the way to success is through the schools. Children of such adults were largely responsible for the following statistics on dropouts in Houston in 1960–61:

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Voluntary dropouts | |
| Entered verified employment | 1,037 |
| Needed at home | 187 |
| Enlisted in Armed Forces | 221 |
| Married | 420 |
| Unable to adjust in school | 286 |
| Not specified | 1,617 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Involuntary dropouts | |
| Left school, address unknown | 735 |
| Placed in corrective institutions | 88 |
| Not specified | 378 |
| Total | 4,964 |

It is the belief of the Houston district that the 4,964 figure can and will be reduced as rigorous efforts are expended to intensify the holding power of the school through the modified program known locally as the 4-year junior high school Talent Preservation Project.

In the spring of 1961, acting on the premise that uniform education is unrealistic for youngsters with academic, physical, economic, and cultural limitations, the Houston Board of Education unanimously authorized a modified program for students identified to be potential dropouts. Teachers who had struggled with disadvantaged students of unknown potential, but limited achievement, enthusiastically welcomed the challenge.

Immediately following the board action, a meeting of all junior high school principals was scheduled by the superintendent for the purpose of explaining tentative plans for the project. School participation in the project to be instituted at grade seven was to be entirely voluntary. Interested principals were invited to attend a second meeting accompanied by two members of their faculties who were willing to participate in the project. Fifteen junior high schools elected to become involved.

A personal letter of commendation to each volunteer teacher was written by the superintendent in charge of secondary education. The board of education authorized the payment of a $100 stipend for a 1-week attendance at a preschool workshop and other inservice meetings. During the 40-hour workshop conducted the last week in August, time was devoted to:

1. Interpretation of the objectives of the project and ways to implement them.
2. Discussion of the characteristics of the potential dropout student.
3. Development of a better understanding of the students and their problems.
4. Exploration of principles for establishing wholesome teacher-student rapport.
5. Identification and discussion of effective instructional techniques.
6. Selection of instructional materials.
7. Production of specific daily plans for academic instruction.
8. Formulation of general plans for cultural enrichment.

The objectives of the project were:

1. To intensify the holding power of the school through dynamic motivation and expert guidance.
2. To develop and strengthen basic communication skills and the fundamentals of mathematics.
3. To provide interesting learning experiences to combat the influence of competitive "pull-away-from-school" attractions.
4. To cultivate a more positive attitude on the part of a student toward his limitations.
5. To attempt to improve the student's damaged self-image and elevate his aspirations.
6. To prepare students who do leave school at the 16th birthday to become a constructive force in American society.
7. To develop worthwhile leisure-time preferences.

A meticulous screening of the permanent records of all incoming seventh graders was begun early in June. The director of guidance and the assistant superintendent in charge of special services scheduled a personal conference with the counselor of each participating school. Eligibility of students was determined according to the following criteria:

1. Chronological age of 14 years.
2. Intelligence quotient span of 76 to 90.
3. Academic retardation of 2 years or more in reading, language, and arithmetic.
4. Social and emotional maladjustment, as indicated by cumulative anecdotal records.
5. Record of irregular school attendance.

Upon conclusion of the first year of experimentation, the project teachers compiled a list of other characteristics they considered to be peculiar to the student regarded to be a potential dropout. They proposed that the following 11 descriptive statements be an addendum to the criteria for identification of these students:

1. Dislikes school as it represents failure, authority, and restraint.
2. Is painfully conscious of physical maturity in comparison to average seventh graders.
3. Has a limited perception and a very short attention span.
4. Feels socially rejected and is resentful.
5. Is discouraged by repeated past failures and does not have the courage to try.
6. Is often withdrawn or aggressive, indifferent or belligerent.

7. Craves attention and will resort to the most undesirable behavior to gain it.

8. Begins a task with enthusiasm but lacks the tenacity to follow through to a satisfactory completion.

9. Refuses to conform to the mores of society, yet constantly seeks reassurance that he is not different from other students.

10. Lives for the day he can leave school and own an automobile.

11. Is eager to experience job situations rather than read stories about the world of work.

Studies of the project students reveal that most of the inadequacies which have contributed to the development of their unique characteristics might be briefly summarized as follows:

1. Lack of stability in the home caused by divorce, desertion, poverty, illness, and mobility.

2. Lack of cultural stimulation in the home attributed to apathy, indolence, poverty, illiteracy, disproportionate family size, and language barriers.

3. Lack of enrichment experiences in both the home and school to ensure the disadvantaged student an equal or comparable readiness so vital to successful learning experiences.

4. Lack of a flexible, realistic curriculum for the disadvantaged child.

The readjustment of project teachers who have had little or no special training for working with academically retarded or slow-learning students has been one of the project's greatest achievements. It is remarkable how they have sought through infinite patience, sincere sympathy, and warm understanding to salvage and rehabilitate these youth. At the beginning and conclusion of each 6 weeks' period, a 4-hour-long planning and evaluation meeting has been scheduled. Other inservice training meetings have been scheduled at the request of the teachers, who commented, "We need the reassurance and inspiration which results from association with other project teachers." One administrator commented after attending an inservice training session, "It is gratifying to witness the mutual respect and professional spirit which exists within the group." From the very beginning there has been a very strong common bond among the teachers. Each seems to regard the assignment not only as an exciting challenge but also as a definite honor. The frequently expressed interest of the school board and administrative staff and the favorable support of the local newspapers have been of inestimable value in the development of project pride.

The general philosophy by which the project has been guided might be stated in these words:

> Disadvantaged young people are worthwhile individuals who possess the potential to become productive adults. The influence of school and teacher is a crucial one, for this may well be the last year the school will have the opportunity to prepare them for assuming their role in society. In most cases the school is their only hope for receiving any planned character, citizenship, and academic training. Too often it is their only exposure to altruistic and aesthetic influences.

The following guidelines have been most satisfactory in establishing wholesome teacher-pupil rapport:

1. Dare to be creative and imaginative.
2. Allow students freedom from pressures, whatever the source.
3. Appear relaxed and informal.
4. Be firm but understanding.
5. Maintain a sense of humor in the most trying and humorless situations.
6. Approach all problems honestly, in absolute control of the emotions; be shock-absorbent.
7. Prepare to work consistently with individuals in a group situation and accept varied responses on a wide range of grade levels.
8. Seek insight to the pupil's problems and interests.
9. Continue to work with enthusiasm for prolonged periods without the encouragement generated by discernible student progress.
10. Demonstrate a sincere concern for the student's welfare.
11. Stimulate through encouragement and sincere praise.

To relieve the heretofore ever-tightening, self-enforcing pressures, to improve students' attitudes toward the world and their peers, a carefully planned counseling program has been pursued. Each project class has guidance materials published by Science Research Associates in the classroom library, including some of the following: *Your Problems: How to Handle Them*, *Getting Along With Parents*, *Planning Your Job Future*, *Guide to Good Manners*, *How To Get Along with Others*, *Life with Brothers and Sisters*, and *Exploring the World of Jobs.*

Films are frequently shown, and the following, which present images with which students can readily identify, have been found to be most effective:

"The Show Off"—10 min.—Young America
"The Other Fellow's Failure"—10 min.—Young America
"The Bully"—10 min.—Young America
"The Good Loser"—13 min.—Young America
"The Griper"—10 min.—Young America
"How Friendly Are You?"—10 min.—Coronet
"How Honest Are You?"—10 min.—Coronet

"Shy Guy"—14 min.—Coronet
"Telephone Courtesy"—25 min.—American T&T
"Vandalism"—10 min.—Sid Davis
"Glen Wakes Up"—11 min.—Young America
"Safe Living at School"—10 min.—Coronet
"School Spirit"—36 frames—McGraw-Hill

Every possible effort is made to help these students think of themselves as individuals who are a necessary and useful part of the school population. Each student is encouraged to participate in some phase of extracurricular activity. During class visitations it is pleasant to observe teachers use an appositive of praise in introducing students and to witness a glow of satisfaction radiate the face of the student who is introduced as an outstanding athlete, a dependable hall patrol, a class representative of the student council, or a member of the glee club. For the majority of the youngsters this is the first year they have experienced a sense of belonging and the stimulant of success. As a followup to classroom visits, a personal letter is written to each class member and reference is made to academic activities, class courtesies, well-groomed appearance, and good housekeeping. Compliments have not been contrived; there has been a wealth of opportunities for sincere praise.

Although great freedom has been afforded the project teacher for modification of the curriculum and departure from traditional methods, strict adherence to the following requirements is expected:

1. Class size is not to exceed 20 students.
2. Students are enrolled or dismissed from the class only on approval of the screening committee.
3. Students enrolled in the project must have parental consent.
4. Lessons must be simple, carefully planned, and presented in small digestible bits.
5. Each learning experience must be evaluated in view of its apparent relation to the needs and characteristics of the student.
6. All standards must be possible for students to meet.

The class schedule of the project students differs from the program of other seventh graders in that only two academic subjects are required. Two of the six periods of the school day are devoted to language arts, with a concentrated emphasis on reading and oral communication. During the third period the students are enrolled in a practical mathematics course. For the remaining three periods, they are scheduled for physical education and two elective courses. The electives which they may choose are crafts, woodshop, art, music, typing, homemaking, public speaking, and band.

Project teachers are scheduled to teach only four classes a day, with the remaining two periods reserved for counseling students and parents, visiting homes, and interpreting the program to other teachers. To assure articulation within each building, a committee comprised of all teachers who have any contact with the project students is organized. Committee meetings are scheduled regularly for the purpose of exploring mutual problems, exchanging suggestions concerning effective practices, and reporting progress.

## Academic Activities

As all students are 2 or more years retarded in reading skills and since books are reminders of failure, care has been exercised to ensure successful initial reading experiences. Materials which are provided are unlike those with which difficulties were previously experienced. A partial list of the materials[1] and publishers of easy-reading, high-interest levels available are:

Materials to Develop Reading Skills
- *Better Reading*, Book 1, and *Intermediate Reading Laboratory*, Science Research Associates
- McCall-Crabbs *Standard Test Lessons in Reading*, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University
- *My Weekly Reader*, American Education Publications, Wesleyan University Press, Inc.
- *Practice Readers*, Books 1 and 2, Webster Publishing Company
- *Reading for Meaning*, J. B. Lippincott Company
- *Reading Skills Builders*, Reader's Digest

Literature for Enjoyment
- *American Adventure Series*, Wheeler Publishing Company
- *Everyreader Series: A Tale of Two Cities, Cases of Sherlock Holmes, Flamingo Feather, Old Testament Stories, To Have and To Hold, Ivanhoe, The Gold Bug* and other stories by Poe, Webster Publishing Company
- *Sea Adventure Books*, Harr Wagner Publishing Company
- *Teen-Age Tales*, D. C. Heath and Company

Audiovisual Aids
- Controlled Reader and elementary filmstrips, Educational Developmental Laboratories
- *Listen and Read* tapes, Educational Developmental Laboratories
- *Dolch Teaching Aids*, Garrard Publishing Company
- Telephone directories (both white and yellow pages)
- Time tables of public transportation agencies
- Maps (local, State, and national)

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[1] Since the preparation of this paper, other useful educational materials, as well as revisions of the following titles, have become available.

A well-balanced reading skills program is conducted. No one method or material is relied upon entirely; instead, varied methods and materials are used. Periodic trips to the library are scheduled, and the cooperation of the librarian in locating appropriate books is solicited. An awards system suggested by the Texas Education Agency has proved to be quite effective. Texas Readers Certificates are prominently displayed on the bulletin boards. Since many of these youngsters during their childhood were deprived of the pleasure of listening to parents and other adults read stories, teachers read regularly to their students. Such books as *The Sports Illustrated Library*, *My Friend Flicka*, *Swiftwater*, *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, *Kon-Tiki*, *Call of the Wild*, and others have brought hours of delight to youngsters who once could not possibly conceive that between the covers of books there is magic. Students are allowed time for buzz sessions to talk about books.

Recordings of poetry, short stories, dramatizations, and choral reading are used to develop appreciation and better listening skills. The *Listen and Read* tapes recently released by Educational Developmental Laboratories are quite effective.

In those schools experimenting with the team-teaching of reading, project students are allotted their proportionate share of visits to the reading laboratory. The students are quite receptive to the idea of visiting the laboratory on a schedule similar to that of other seventh-grade students. Improvement of reading rate is not the purpose for using the controlled reader; however, reading with the machine at a comfortable rate with elementary filmstrips is an enticing lure. The boys of the project are quite gadget-conscious, and the idea of a reading machine seems an appealing approach. Maps, globes, and various types of visual aids supplement reading materials.

The first unit of study in the English class provides orientation to the new school. Since many of the local schools are named in honor of Americans of distinction, students are given an opportunity to learn about the person for whom the school is named from a biography which the teacher reads. The history, routine, activities, names of key personnel, and the physical plan of the school are topics for several days of discussion and study. Spelled out in many interesting forms is the message, "You belong here."

The instructional program in the English class is built around situations in which students practice language activities rather than learn a body of rules and principles. The communication-centered English program requires less exercise-doing and more actual expression of ideas in oral and written form than often occurs. Sentence sense is developed through student writing of original sentences rather than by punctuating and labeling the parts of sentences from a text. Students are taught to use their five senses as a foundation for the thought underlying all compositions.

There is little possibility that the disadvantaged youth who becomes a dropout will ever be requested to write a research paper or an essay, but there is strong likelihood that he will face rigorous demands for social and business letter writing. Certainly throughout his life he will be required to complete many various types of forms. Should the student become sufficiently prepared through the modified English and reading program for a successful school career, the essay and research paper will come later. With the sentence sense he has developed, he will be decidedly better qualified for this type of assignment. However, should he withdraw from the classroom to enter the world of work, he must be prepared to cope with the many forms and blanks which are often a part of a clerk's or delivery boy's job. Students are given instruction and experience in neatly and legibly completing bank deposit slips, checks, receipts, contest forms, subscription and mail order blanks, and applications for driver's license, employment, library cards, health certificates, and social security cards.

When using the tele-trainer for improving telephone techniques, a second medium, the tape recorder, is brought into the classroom. The trainer is used to demonstrate how to make an appointment, to place an order at a department store, to report an emergency to proper city authorities. The recorder collects the material for future lessons in usage. Learning to give succinct directions, to request and offer explanations, to make introductions, to extend congratulations and apologies, to converse intelligently and correctly are experiences which the disadvantaged child can recognize as having greater practical value to him than the study of rhetorical principles.

Vocabulary development, diction, and oral reading skills acquire new importance when the public address system is available to students. Panel discussions, announcements, dramatizations, choral reading, and poetry interpretation are accomplished with enthusiasm when participants are allowed to broadcast from the sound room to the English class. Each morning the daily newspaper is delivered to the project classes. A regular time is designated for skimming the front page and discussing the news of national and international importance. Word attack study is regarded as more meaningful and practical when pupils learn how to unlock and pronounce the names of important places and people. Even a limited knowledge of current events "lifts the lid" for these pupils.

The weather report is a "must," and it is great sport to evaluate its accuracy at the close of each day. Cartoons, pictures, fillers, jokes, human interest stories tempt the reluctant reader to test his reading power. All enjoy the sports page. Students are allowed to read the comics, but are advised that such reading is for recreational purposes. That reading can be recreation is quite a revelation. In many of their homes no books, magazines, or newspapers are available. The feature articles of the society section provide motivation and reference material for daily stress on good grooming and etiquette. Teachers have also used the catalogs of various mail-order houses advantageously in units devoted to cleanliness and proper dress. Classified ads are used to reinforce the "stay-in-school" campaign. The absence of employment opportunities for youth of limited training is regularly invited to their attention.

In order that students may have access to concrete objects so necessary for complete understanding, many teaching aids have been made available, such as thermometers, scales, clock dials, flash cards, numbers games, and toy money.

In attempting to follow directions in homemaking and shop courses, girls and boys have come to realize the necessity for improved reading and mathematics skills.

The principal of one school admitted that he had begun the project with definite skepticism. He had insisted on scheduling 30 students, instead of the recommended 20, for each of his two classes, basing his resistance upon his prediction that by mid-October the dropout rate would reduce the class size to fewer than 15. Of the original 60 project students, 48 are still in school and appear to be happy and well adjusted. The percentage of dropouts in the regular seventh-grade classes in his school has far exceeded that of the project classes. The principal is requesting approval for organization of several additional seventh-grade Talent Preservation Project classes in the forthcoming fall semester.

## Enrichment Activities

Motivational approaches which have been most successful are the carefully planned excursions which students have taken to points of local interest. A boat trip down the Houston Ship Channel to the San Jacinto Battlegrounds, the cradle of Texas independence, was scheduled for each of the 30 classes. The captain of the vessel lectured to the students about the history and construction of the channel, the foreign ships in the port, the grain elevators and methods for loading ships, and the various industrial plants along the channel. Teachers report that after this experience the daily shipping reports became another avidly read section of the newspaper. Students also requested a unit of study about State history.

Visits to dairies, milk plants, bakeries, and supermarkets motivated units of study on diet and nutrition. Public utility plants, newspaper plants, military bases, parks, public libraries, municipal airport, zoo, museums, and radio and television studios were included in the itinerary. The Youth Symphony and a ballet performance sponsored by the Houston Independent School District were also attended by the project classes.

Students in a psychology class of one of the local universities became interested in the project and asked to participate. Each university student volunteered to sponsor an assigned school on a guided tour of the campus. An unexpected development resulting from the university tour was the offer of the college students to visit schools regularly each week for the remainder of the semester to assist the teacher with noninstructional duties and to tutor individual students. Project teachers regarded this service as one of the most worthwhile developments of the year. The visit of the college students made university attendance seem a realistic possibility.

One of Houston's large department stores invited the project classes to their Town Hall auditorium where a most interesting film entitled "Dining Out" was presented. A representative of the book department discussed the possibility of accumulating a personal library through the purchase of the good, exciting books available in paperback form. It seemed unbelievable that many of the youngsters had never been in a large department store before and that an elevator and escalator ride could be the thrilling new experience it appeared to be.

Not only did the classes visit, but they received visitors as well. Community agencies and private citizens were made aware of the project and its objectives and were invited to visit the schools.

The U.S. Army Recruiting Office scheduled army counselors to visit each project class and present the Army's "Stay in School" program. Counselors from the Texas Employment Agency came to classes and discussed the importance of education and the critical lack of employment opportunities for the nonskilled worker. Representatives from the Houston Police Department and the Texas Department of Public Safety visited some of the classes and discussed the necessity for law enforcement and safety measures. Dentists, nurses, librarians, counselors, and representatives from business and industry have also visited the classes to discuss their particular fields. Also, drama and modern dance departments from senior high schools have brought live drama and the dance to some of the classes.

## Project Evaluation

The success of the project can be evaluated only by determining whether any of the original objectives have been realized to any degree. The effectiveness of the measures employed to intensify the holding power of the school may be judged by the percentage of dropouts. During the first year of the project 1.9 percent of the 556 project students left school. The daily attendance of students is another indication of the strength of the holding power. Records indicate that many project students were very irregular in their attendance in elementary school. Attendance in junior high has improved. Average daily attendance for a 6-week period has been as high as 95.7 percent and was lowest, 71.7 percent, during a seasonal epidemic when all class averages in the district were low. During the fall semester 25 students in the project received awards for perfect attendance and 27 students received similar awards for the spring semester. Six students have received special awards for perfect attendance throughout the entire year.

Complete test scores reflecting academic gains or losses are not presently available. However, requests from teachers for more difficult materials of higher levels for next year suggest that academic gains are considerable.

Attitudes, aspirations, and emotional environment cannot be measured objectively. The opinions of school personnel and the students themselves must be considered. Principals, assistant principals, counselors, and teachers have been quite successful in inculcating a sense of group and individual pride. Students frequently comment, "For the first time in my life I enjoy school." Many believe that because of the project they have learned more this year that at any time in the past. Assistant principals report very few disciplinary problems with the project students. Principals have commented that there seem to be some beneficial effects on regular classes. The attractive bulletin boards, hobby centers, book displays, current events corners, and effective instructional practices of the Talent Preservation Project inspire those who work with average students to be more creative. One principal reported, "Talent preservation is the most needed and beneficial program that has ever been offered in my building."

## Recommendations

Based on experiences during the first year of the project, the following recommendations for helping potential dropouts are offered:

1. Devise effective methods for parental involvement. Parents have been a competitive factor in some cases. Not only do they allow but they often require the student to miss school to perform menial tasks. They do not discourage, but frequently encourage students in their desires to leave school at the 16th birthday in order to supplement the family income. The problems of the disadvantaged student cannot be solved by the schools alone. Parents must be educated in the ways they may reinforce the efforts of the teachers. They must be motivated to visit the school and become more active in school and community life.

2. Solicit the cooperation of community agencies. Properly supervised recreational facilities are needed. The possibility of neighborhood study centers staffed with volunteer tutors should be explored.

3. Engage the services of teachers qualified to teach English as a second language. In some of the 30 classes the students come from homes where Spanish is spoken exclusively. Such students have not fully succeeded with the reading process because of their language deficiencies.

4. Give students a picture of the world of work which will one day be a part of their lives. In addition to taking field trips and excursions, students should visit industries where they may be employed after leaving school. Teachers suggest such places as parking garages, kitchens of large hotels and hospitals, maintenance departments of refineries and industrial plants, laundries, produce markets, and truck farms.

5. Continue to seek opportunities for on-the-job training for students. The affiliation of one project teacher with the American Legion enabled her to secure four $100 scholarships to a local beauty college. The recipients attended classes after school and on Saturday. Through a local health agency, arrangements have been completed for three students interested in careers in practical nursing to work in a local hospital during the summer vacation.

6. Develop materials needed for extensive shop programs. Continue the search for better instructional materials for the academic phase of the project.

7. Explore the possibilities for diversified work centers to provide training for future employment of youth as cooks, bakers, tailors, plumbers, filling station attendants, carpenters, mechanics, electricians, laundry workers, parking lot attendants,

meter readers, bricklayers, truck and bus drivers, hotel and hospital housekeepers, nurses' aides, barbers, and beauticians.

8. Conduct an annual workshop for all teachers who will be teaching project classes in language, reading, and mathematics.

9. Include history as the third academic subject at the eighth-grade level and science at the ninth-grade level.

10. Utilize educational television to motivate and enrich the instructional program.

In conclusion, the realism with which the problems of the disadvantaged youth are acknowledged and solved might be compared to the way one handles the lowly thistle. Hesitate, touch it timidly, and the thistle stings; grasp it firmly and its spines crush in your hand. Face a problem boldly, come to grips with it, and strangely enough the thorns of the thistle lose their power to sting. It is not a matter of whether the disadvantaged youth shall be rehabilitated, but merely a question of *when*. Preventive measures are far more effective than corrective measures will ever prove to be.

# The Demonstration Guidance Project and the Teaching of English

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THE BOARD of Education of New York City set out in 1956 to increase the educational opportunities in the public schools of the city. The program followed from a recommendation of a subcommittee of the board's Commission on Integration and was known as the Demonstration Guidance Project. The primary purpose of the project was to identify and upgrade potential college students from backgrounds of limited cultural opportunities. At its inception at the junior high school level, the project was predicated on the assumption that given sufficient personal guidance many students, despite a background of cultural deprivation, could sustain themselves in academic work and that, with this chance to realize their true potential, they could then aspire to education beyond the high school level. This provocative concept aroused the interest of the College Entrance Examination Board which was soon to give both advisory and financial assistance to the program.[1]

The schools chosen for this experiment in 1957 were Junior High School 43 Manhattan, situated within hailing distance of Columbia University, but typical of New York's melting pot, and George Washington High School, a comprehensive academic high school embracing a mixed ethnic group. George Washington High School is, in many ways, typical of a large urban high school. Its student population is over five thousand, many of them first generation Americans from 60 different countries of origin. Twenty-five percent are Negro and 10 percent Puerto Rican; the range of ability runs the gamut from IQ's of 60 to those near 170. In sophomore English, there are six different tracks provided to care for students of every level of ability. The school is typical in that, despite its heterogeneity there are no racial tensions; there are almost no serious disciplinary infractions. Excellence is demanded at every level of ability, and a tradition of both good behavior and scholastic achievement is firmly embedded.

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[1] For 3 years, aid was also received from the National Service and Scholarship Fund for Negro Students.

In describing this experiment, I shall deal with the first class in our experiment because of its heterogeneous nature and because it probably resembles groups in other cities. Succeeding classes have been more homogeneous and the results, therefore, more predictable. This first group included 87 Negroes, 36 Puerto Ricans, 1 Oriental, and 24 others. This group of students was chosen on the basis of academic potential. If there seemed to be any possibility that these students might succeed in college preparatory work, they were given the opportunity to try. The IQ's measured by verbal tests ranged from 70 to 141; 70 percent had IQ's below 100; 89 percent were below grade level in reading, and 88 percent below grade level in arithmetic. Their Iowa tests showed that nearly three quarters of the group were below the 50th percentile in social studies, correctness in writing, general vocabulary, and quantitative thinking. On the basis of these figures, it would be easy to assume that at this stage academic accomplishment was an impossible goal for many or most of them.

These, then, were the pioneers, the trailblazers; and it was on these students that the burden of proof rested. The problem went far deeper than simple academic accomplishment. Many of the students came from homes with serious family problems. Almost half the pupils had lost one or both parents. Poverty was the common denominator. As a result, they were handicapped by emotional problems which demanded solution before success in school was even a remote possibility. Before academic achievement could be expected, academic attitudes had to be established: the doing of homework, the completion of long-range assignments, the budgeting of time, and outside reading, for example.

Obviously, it was necessary that every facility the school had to offer must be put to the service of these young people, to free them from whatever factors were holding them back so that they could do the work they were capable of performing. Individual attention had priority over all other considerations—individual attention from the principal, administrative assistant in charge of guidance, counselors, psychologist, social worker, and classroom teachers. So that teachers might give them all the time they needed, classes were small: 15 to 18 in English, 10 to 15 in mathematics and language. Not only were classes small, but in the vital area of English, they were also programed for a double period daily.

The selection of teachers for the project classes was purposely kept representative of the entire staff, and included relatively new as well as thoroughly experienced teachers. This choice was made on the practical basis that, under normal conditions in other schools where this program might be tried, teachers would have to be chosen from the staff as a whole. The one common characteristic was a warm and sympathetic interest in the students individually and collectively.

The curriculum in all subjects was the regular academic curriculum; no attempt was made to simplify it for easier grasp. Neither was there any lowering of academic standards. Each student was expected to achieve as well as any other student in the academic course.

Even in this carefully selected group, there were many gradations of ability, and it was deemed wise to set up homogeneous grouping. Ten separate classes in English were formed, and each group progressed according to its needs and its potential. Within this grouping, students were shifted either up or down as the need arose. The grouping enabled teachers to work intensively in the areas of each section's weakness.

Because of the nature of the background of these students, more than academic stimulation was needed. Assistance was provided by a battery of supporting services without which favorable results could not have been obtained. The first year one counselor was provided for the group; later another counselor was added so that the ratio was about 1 to 100 over the 5-year period. Counselors worked closely with students, teachers, and parents. Frequent interviews, either "command performances" or self-referrals, gave the students a feeling of support and direction in solving or ameliorating those problems which stood in the way of academic progress. Most students were interviewed at least 4 times a term and some as many as 20 times. They were counseled about their programs, vocational plans, family relationships, and such perennial problems as financial needs and boy-girl relationships.

In addition, each counselor met weekly with his group during half of one English class period. In the 10th year, sessions focused on orientation to the school, good study habits, and self-evaluation; in the 11th year, on entrance requirements. In the 12th year, student accomplishments, their future, and the transition from high school to college or a job formed the bases of discussion.

Despite this intensive individual attention, the services of a clinical team were also necessary. A psychologist and social worker who were assigned on a part-time basis serviced about 25 percent of the class. These specialists handled problems involving severe emotional disturbances, severe social pathology, and some minor emotional difficulties. About half the group referred to the team were able to benefit considerably from their help; the rest presented problems of such a severe nature that they required treatment over a long period of time. This help was afforded by the Bureau of Child Guidance and other community agencies.

The value of the clinical service cannot be overestimated. The success of the clinicians in dealing with certain environmental factors such as providing part-time jobs, monetary help, better sleeping arrangements, and places to study, as well as fostering improved relationships between parents and children, made life bearable and school achievement possible for many boys and girls.

Another factor of primary importance was the parents of these young people. The vast majority of children look to their parents for security, affection, advice, financial support, and sympathetic understanding. For the project student, the school all too often represented all of these intangibles. The cooperation and support of the parents was a necessity if the students were to succeed. It was important that parents understand the objectives of the program and the benefits that would accrue to their children and, indirectly, to them.

Contacts were often difficult to make, but every effort was made to reach the parents through telephone calls, letters, visits by the counselor and social worker, and individual and group meetings at the school. Offers of assistance were made to solve such problems as medical needs, unemployment, and poor housing. Where there was poor response from the parents, attempts were made to enlist help of older brothers and sisters, grandparents, aunts, and even neighbors. Parents who were recent arrivals from Puerto Rico and the South had to be educated in the folkways and mores of a different culture. Many lacked understanding of the social, emotional, and material needs of adolescents. They were not aware of, and many were not interested in, the educational and cultural opportunities available to their children. Some felt that a girl should not have more than elementary schooling.

We sought to influence the parents in such things as being reasonable in the assignment of home chores, in providing privacy and time for study, and in encouraging good school work. Parents were given information about the school, its organization, and its activities. In some instances, parents were encouraged to attend classes in English for the foreign-born. They were urged to promote the emotional growth of their children by being more permissive and by allowing them to express their opinions in the discussion of family problems. At times, it was suggested that parents forego the meager contributions earned by the child from an unskilled job so that he might spend more time in studying and preparing himself for a career. Some parents felt that the school was "siding with the child against the parent." When a parent refused to accept our point of view, we would try to work with other relatives who could reach the parent. Where the parent was inflexible, we tried to help the child adjust to the situation.

The ultimate results were most heartening. There was a threefold increase in the number of letters, phone calls, and visits by parents to the counselor and the school. Even after the graduation of their children, many parents continued to get in touch with the counselor. They asked advice, expressed gratitude, and informed the counselor of their children's progress in school or on the job. The financial assistance given by the school made a deep impression on many parents. They were incredulous, overjoyed, and grateful. Some thought the grant was a loan and asked about the terms of repayment. All were pleased with the school's interest in their children and its readiness to help.

Nevertheless, as ambitious as the aim itself might have been, the school recognized the need for solid results, and it was here that the Demonstration Guidance Project was a success. A complete success? No. For many of the pupils, a program that began with entrance into the second year of high school came too late to overcome habits, attitudes, and deficiencies built up over years of limited experiences in home and community. Fifty-three pupils who started out in the project dropped out before graduation; of these, 22 left for other cities, other schools, or for reasons of health. Of the remaining 31, some had to leave for economic reasons, and in the case of others, the problems were so difficult that they could not be resolved through the existing facilities of the school. However, despite these losses, the gains were so heartening that New York City has adopted the program on a considerably modified scale. It now embraces over 30,000 youngsters in the elementary grades and in junior high schools of New York City under the title of "Higher Horizons." The reason for the modification was largely financial. The original program cost about $250 more than it costs now for each child, a rather modest investment in terms of the results. The city is now spending between $35 and $50 per child in the new program.

What were some of the encouraging results? In 1957, the median IQ score on the Pintner Intermediate Form B, Verbal Series, was 92.9; in 1960 on the Pintner Advanced Form B, Verbal Series, the median IQ score was 102.2. Sixty-four students showed gains of more than five points, and of these 64, 24 gained 6 to 10 points, 27 gained 11 to 20 points, and 13 gained 21 to 40 points. In the first graduating class, 11 of the students attained honors in one or more subjects. Three won seven medals or certificates for academic accomplishments. Three received four awards for outstanding citizenship records. One had the distinction of being a commencement speaker. Three of the project students ranked first, fourth, and sixth in a graduating class of over 900. Some of these students achieved at levels far beyond anything that could have been anticipated. Four pupils who did exceptional work came to the class with IQ scores of 108, 128, 99, and 125. After 2 years in the program, the IQ score was 134 for the pupil who formerly had a 108 score, and above 139 for the others. It should be noted that 139 is the maximum score on the Pintner Advanced Form B, Verbal Series.

Those who had been more seriously retarded upon entrance both as to IQ and reading scores made phenomenal leaps ahead. Intelligence quotient scores of 74, 83, 85, and 72 jumped to 106, 118, 98, and 96, respectively—and this in 1 year. Reading scores of 6.3, 6.5, 7.6, and 5.7 improved by 3.2, 2.1, 1.3, and 2.9 years in the same period of time. The reason behind much of this remarkable improvement lay in the pupils' overcoming language difficulties and personality problems. All these students were graduated with academic diplomas.

The number finishing high school was also a criterion by which to measure the success of the program. Sixty-four percent of the group were graduated compared to an average of 47 percent for the four previous classes from J.H.S. 43. By the same standard of comparison, 41 percent of the project group went on to further education, over three times as many as in the past. Over twice as many completed the academic course of study.

One of the reasons for the holding power of the program was the early realization that the original goal of college for all was not a realistic one. Those students who normally would have left school because of the pressures of an academic program were permitted to change to the commercial or general track where they could achieve a measure of success. Here they became satisfactory students and good school citizens rather than dropouts or discipline problems. Of these general students, nearly 50 percent went on to further education in community colleges or technical schools. Of those who did not go on to college, 30 had jobs waiting for them upon graduation.

Although I have presented many statistics in this summary of what the project was able to accomplish, one must never forget that each statistic represents a human being who has been helped to read, write, think, and, most of all, to become a self-reliant, self-respecting individual. The self-image of most of these young people was transformed from one of defeat and despair to one of hope and self-confidence. These are the results that cannot be reported statistically.

Needless to say, the English program was the heart of the experiment. Until these young people had attained sufficient skill in the area of communication and appreciation, the remainder of the program was at a standstill.

The gravity of the problem was most evident in the serious retardation in reading for the majority of these students. How were they to cope with the challenge of academic work when their reading ability lagged anywhere from 5 months to 5 years behind their grade level? The converse of the problem lay in their inability to express themselves correctly, let alone gracefully, in written and oral communication.

During the 3 years of the program, we had to breach the walls of the cultural milieu surrounding these young people: language difficulty, indifference, negative attitudes on the part of both family and community. Very few teenagers, even from the most favored areas, dare to be "different," and yet these boys and girls were being asked to reject the ingrained values of their contemporaries and neighbors. Even though they felt some sensitivity to good speech, fine writing, or good theatre, to be different took more courage than some of them possessed.

How did we attack the problem? First of all, homogeneous groupings were set up to enable English teachers to deal more adequately with the wide range of abilities. Ten different ability groupings were set up, ranging from students with IQ scores of 110 and above and reading scores at or no more than 1 year below grade level, down to a grouping of IQ's from 72 to 87 and reading retardation from 2 to 5 years.

Some of the students made remarkable progress during that first year, increasing their reading scores by as much as 3 years and, accordingly, were moved to a higher level. In addition to this grouping, classes were kept small. During the sophomore year, the project students were matched with students of like ability from other schools to prevent segregation and to widen their social contacts; for in other subjects such as mathematics and language, the classes were comprised of 10 to 12 project students only. The English classes for the junior and senior years contained only the students from our project.

Perhaps the most valuable aspect of planning the English program was the assigning of these students to a double period of English. This extended time made it possible to give to each student the amount of individual attention he needed to overcome his specific difficulties, to explore intensively the moral and ethical values of the literature studied, and to provide drill in spelling, punctuation, and usage where so much work needed to be done. Moreover, the preparation of assignments under the supervision of the teacher was possible under these conditions, and more effective study habits could be inculcated. The unhurried pace of this double period made for a pleasant entente between student and teacher, for it provided time for an unhurried exploration of cultural bypaths. At first this aspect of the program met with strong resistance from the students. They complained that the time was too long, that they received no extra point credits for the additional period, and that it prevented them from taking certain electives. As time wore on, however, they began to see advantages in terms of individual help and personal growth and were glad to make use of this opportunity.

Teachers who were to act as guides included both mature men and women and enthusiastic young people. In this way, the project students were exposed to the best of both worlds. These teachers played a vital part in the building of a curriculum suited to the needs of the students. Frequent meetings were held with the principal and the head of the English department during which they were carefully briefed as to the goals of the project and the nature of the students with whom they were dealing. They were encouraged to seek help from the guidance counselors in order to gain insight into the peculiar problems of each individual student. They were provided with statistical data and IQ and reading scores for each child. Within the framework of the academic curriculum and the traditional areas of English instruction, they were allowed plenty of leeway for creative approaches to the problem.

The curriculum in literature followed the general pattern for academic students except in those classes where the level of attainment was so low that it seemed advisable to employ those texts used by our general students. There was a great desire on the part of these students, already set apart, to read and do what others in the grade were doing. Carrying the same books was an outward sign of belonging to the school as a whole. In sophomore classes of average ability, *The Yearling*, *Silas Marner*, and *Modern Biography* were used. Obviously, the human relationships, the need for belonging, the courage to face life and grow up were implicit in the study of the two novels. *Modern Biography* led naturally to a discussion of the difficulties that all men have to face and of the personal qualities needed to triumph over them.

For the more able students, a brief excursion was made into Greek mythology to provide them with a basic literary vocabulary and background useful for the reading they were to do in the coming years. They found these stories were fun to read and interpret. In connection with this, they worked on projects in which the aim was to convince them that the life and thought of the Greeks is still very much alive today. They gathered material on mythology in the heavens, in modern advertising, in symbolic decoration such as

Prometheus and Atlas at Rockefeller Center and Mercury and Urania on the pediment of Grand Central Station. They visited the Metropolitan Museum to see painting and sculpture based on mythical characters and stories, and to study the Hearst Collection of Greek vases portraying on their ancient surfaces the very tales they had been studying. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were a logical outcome of this study; and many of them, for the first time, understood the lines translated by Andrew Lang when he wrote of "the surge and thunder of the Odyssey."

The texts used in the junior year were *Julius Caesar*, *Abe Lincoln Grows Up*, and a collection of poetry. Fortunately, the Shakespearewrights were doing a performance of *Julius Caesar* at the time of the study, and this provided our students an opportunity to realize that Shakespeare was a working dramatist. Once the hurdle of Elizabethan language forms and the conventions of the Elizabethan theatre were understood, they eagerly read the play and found much to discuss in modern parallels of dictatorship, the politically astute and the politically naive, as well as the character of mob actions and reactions. In one especially able class, the instructor also read *Caesar and Cleopatra* with the students and planted the seeds of critical and abstract thinking by comparing Shaw's and Shakespeare's Caesar.

The teaching of poetry was a more difficult task. As most teachers know only too well, the teenager, although he himself feels deeply, is more than a little suspicious of poetry. Narrative poetry is perhaps the quickest way of breaking down this resistance, for through the enjoyment of the story, it is possible to show how the poet heightens his effects by use of evocative language and compression. Once the initial plunge is taken, it is possible to lead students to see that the deepest and most universal feelings of men and women of all ages are expressed by the poet, and that the poet often expresses for them the thoughts and emotions for which they have no words. The specific poems designed to elicit these responses were left to the discretion of the teacher.

Later in the year, essays were studied and one novel, either *Giants in the Earth* or *My Antonia.* Through the medium of the essay, pupils were brought to see that even the most commonplace experiences have an added dimension for reflection, and that attitudes toward life as expressed in Emerson's *Self Reliance* have an enduring value. It was an unusual experience to hear a great man urging them to have the courage to be themselves. The world of abstract thinking opened to them served as an impetus to their own writing. The two pioneer novels had a special value because of their emphasis on the part racial minorities had in the building of America and because of the exploration of difficult personal relationships.

The senior year offered more opportunity for penetrating exploration of attitudes toward life and character. Such plays as ***Enemy of the People*** and ***Beyond the Horizon*** were natural springboards for discussions of morality and expediency and of the effect of choice on the patterns of one's life. The novels ***Arrowsmith*** and ***Ethan Frome*** lent themselves to this framework of discussion. By means of these reading experiences the students learned to look beyond the plot to the thematic material of the author and to the commentary he makes on life and people. For the top level classes, ***Macbeth*** and ***Hamlet*** were also read. As a culminating experience in the probing of human character and human relationships, these works need no comment.

For pupils who were more seriously retarded, such collections as ***Short Story Parade*** were used; but the focus was the same, relating their own lives, problems, and sense of values to those of the fictional characters. Abridged versions of ***David Copperfield***, ***The Count of Monte Cristo***, and ***The Good Earth*** were also read. Much of the reading was done in class, and specific questions asked in advance were answered by pupils in writing. Careful supervision had to be exercised with this group to enable them to understand the events about which they were reading and to draw conclusions from the facts presented.

Classroom reading was only a starting point in their approach to literature. Pupils had been encouraged to read in the junior high school by such slogans as: "Readers are Leaders," and special recognition was given to students who had read a certain number of books. Many pupils came from homes where English was not spoken, where there were no books or even newspapers, where TV was often the sole cultural medium, and where, too often, there was no quiet place to read. Some responded immediately and enthusiastically to the wonderful world of books; others took longer to become interested.

Carefully chosen lists of books were presented, broad in their range of interests and level of difficulty. The specific purpose was to introduce as many types of reading as possible: historical novels, classic short novels, modern plays, a Shakespearean play, a collection of poetry by one author, biographies of outstanding contemporary figures, magazines, short stories, great classic novels, current best sellers, books of travel and adventure, and newspapers. The results of the exposure were remarkable: students at the top level were reading Aeschylus, Camus, St. Exupery, and Koestler. In one class which was offered the opportunity to purchase paperbacks at a discount, 23 students readily bought over $50 worth of books—and wise choices too. Obviously, the outside reading amplified and supplemented both the techniques and ideas taught in the classroom.

At the other end of the spectrum, in a class where it was a struggle to get pupils to do any outside reading, one teacher used the device of oral rather than written reports so that the experience could be shared and a spark, perhaps, lit in other minds.

At this point, it would be only natural to inquire how pupils so far retarded in reading could cope with the demands that were being made on them. They were aided by remedial reading instruction during the extended English period. Students were given the Nelson Reading Test upon entrance, and on the basis of information obtained from their scores, they were assigned to various levels in the Science Research Associates Reading Laboratory. Careful graph charts of progress were kept by each student, and it was a cause for celebration when he was told he could move on to the next level. The brighter students in 8 months improved by a year or a year and a half, but some of the most dramatic results were obtained with the slower students, especially where there had been a language or emotional difficulty. In addition to the use of the reading laboratory, group reading of newspaper accounts, editorials, columns, and reviews sharpened their perceptions and improved their vocabularies. Supervised reading periods where reading materials were brought into the classroom enabled the teacher to assist those students in areas where they were experiencing difficulty. Most of all, it was necessary to provide stimulating material for this work so that interest might be sustained while progress was being made.

Serious deficiencies in composition work were attacked in two ways. Errors common to most written work formed the basis for remedial lessons. Spelling errors, inadequate sentences, verb forms, and punctuation deficiencies were handled in terms of the needs of each student. Added to this were lessons in the basic grammatical concepts which help to establish a vocabulary with which to communicate concerning language relationships. There is not much point in telling a child that the predicate does not agree with the subject if the terms "subject" and "predicate" are not in his vocabulary. The students enjoyed the lessons in grammar, providing as they did a criterion for appropriateness of expression.

Spelling and vocabulary were tackled as two phases of the same problem. The architecture of English words—prefix, root, and stem —were emphasized as well as the meaning of each part of the word and the function of the prefix and suffix. The sources of the language were explored and a basic group of root and prefix meanings from the Latin and Greek opened new vistas both in vocabulary and spelling. Constant drill and frequent tests gave pupils a method of improvement and a sense of progress. Naturally, much of the vocabulary was related to the literature they were reading, and here it was possible to teach them to arrive at the meaning of some words through context. Basic lessons in the resources of the dictionary were given.

Hand in hand with improvement in the technical aspects of the language came training in the use of language for writing and speaking. As has been indicated, much of the composition work was an outgrowth of pupils' reading experiences. Early compositions were of the narrative type. Pupils were taught that by observation and self-analysis they could make what they deemed commonplace of interest to others. They had to be trained to organize their ideas carefully, sentence by sentence, paragraph by paragraph. Specific short-term goals were set: the elimination of a particular error or the improvement of vocabulary or style. Later, essays of opinion or factual papers based upon wide reading were required. Because of the size of the classes, it was possible to discuss each composition individually with each student, a desideratum which all English teachers devoutly hope for. Work was shared orally. In the lower groupings, such practical work as filling in Social Security forms, writing letters of invitation or gratitude, application or complaint were of real value. Oral composition in terms of a mock personal interview pointed up the necessity for an adequate vocabulary and habits of correct usage.

From this survey of the techniques used in teaching English to culturally different young people, it can be seen that the approach is much the same as for all students—only more so! It is necessary to use every means for enrichment which the home and the environment do not provide. It is necessary to establish far-reaching but realistic goals. Most of all, because affection and interest are lacking in the lives of the culturally disadvantaged, it is necessary to give these youth what is popularly known as "TLC"—tender loving care. Most of them responded warmly to genuine interest on the part of their teachers, and the enthusiasm of their instructors led many of them to believe that knowledge was a world worth striving for.

Reading and writing are but stepping stones to the enlargement of the mind and spirit. Many other activities such as trips to points of historical interest or an evening at the theatre were completely outside the experience of these young people. For this reason, a rich program of cultural activities was embarked upon to broaden the scope of their intellects and to deepen their esthetic appreciation. We tried to impress upon the students that much of their education took place outside the classroom, and that to be educated in the truest sense of the word, they must be aware of and learn to appreciate other stimuli to personal growth.

Attendance at all activities was voluntary. It was found that students responded more readily when given the opportunity to choose the program they wanted. Some idea of the scope of the activities lay in the fact that in 5 years over 5,000 individual attendances were recorded and that $10,000 was spent—$8,000 from the students' own pockets.

Because one of the aims of the project was to interest able students in continuing their education, visits were made to college campuses, both local and out of town. Two trips, during which they were the guests of Amherst College and Harvard University, proved to be stimulating. Undoubtedly the most popular and sought-after activity was the theatre. By arrangement with the American National Theatre Academy, tickets at $1 each were made available. As a result, these young people over the past 5 years have seen enough first-rate plays and musicals to make the ordinary theatregoer envious. An annual trip to the Stratford Shakespeare Festival was enjoyed thoroughly. The first year, I had the feeling that most of them had signed up to enjoy a day in the country and that Shakespeare, in a sense, was the price of freedom. After a rollicking performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the first question they asked upon leaving the theatre was, "When can we come again?" As a result of this experience, many have attended New York's summer productions of Shakespeare in the Park. I am no longer surprised when I attend a play and find myself sitting next to a project graduate.

The high point of the activities for each graduating class has been a trip to Washington, D.C. The students have been fortunate enough to have been granted interviews with Lawrence Derthick, former United States Commissioner of Education, Abraham Ribicoff, former Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, and Senator Jacob Javits, of New York, a distinguished graduate of George Washington High School. In all of these interviews, the graduates conducted themselves with poise and intelligence.

Careful preparation through orientation sessions was made for attendance at each of these activities. Wherever possible, this was done in the English class. For example, before the class went to Stratford, the season's production was studied as a classroom project. In certain cases, the music, history, or science department briefed pupils beforehand. Followup work was also carried on in class; however, it was found that much of the pleasure, both anticipatory and actual, was destroyed by formal written reports. Informal discussions of each experience were encouraged by the classroom teacher, and very often references to visits were made in student writing.

Five years of intensive effort have been expended by the students, teachers, counselors, and administrators involved in the Demonstration Guidance Project. When it all began, none of us knew what the outcome would be. We learned that proper motivation was essential

**but that this alone would not insure accomplishment unless it was joined with sustained effort on the part of the pupil. Furthermore, it became apparent that motivation and effort alone could not win the battle; certain abilities were also necessary. For some few, their opportunity had come too late and the effects of a short lifetime of deprivation and lack of hope were not to be overcome in the brief time at our disposal. Nevertheless, for those whom the project was able to reach—and these were the vast majority—tangible results were evidenced in college acceptances, completion of high school, and success in academic work. The students became active school citizens, and many obviously developed poise, maturity, and a sense of self-worth. Most important was this new image of themselves which enabled them to achieve in many areas and to face the future with hope and confidence.**

**We believe that every facet of the program was essential—subject matter emphasis, guidance and clinical services, the cultural program, work with parents, and the double period of English. There were no easy answers and no substitutes for sound educational procedures. There were no dramatic devices or inspirational slogans with which to work miracles. Whatever was accomplished came as a result of hard, unceasing, day-in, day-out work on everyone's part, the students' most of all.**

**In terms of its original goals, the project fell short of the ideal, but the heartening reality of its accomplishment is measured by a comparison of project students with previous classes from the same junior high school. By this criterion, 39 percent more students finished high school, 2½ times as many completed the academic course, and 3½ times as many went on to some form of higher education. These facts prove that, through this approach to education, there can be promise of a good life for an untold number of boys and girls for whom in the past there has been little promise. The trailblazers have shown the way for others to follow.**

# The Chicago Program in Language and Reading

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THE CHICAGO program in language arts for culturally different youth is based on the *Supplement to the Teaching Guide for the Language Arts,* developed by the Bureau of Curriculum Development. This series of guides, representing the efforts of many teachers and the Curriculum Council on Language Arts, includes reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills at all levels, including high school. Each guide points out the characteristics of the child at a given level, and suggests classroom procedures that will help to bring about the desired achievements in the students, along with well-balanced personalities.

Experiences, materials, and progress for the above-average, the below-average, and the average pupil are suggested. The format, the practical approaches, and the teacher helps have been useful since they were first made available in 1958. Considerations discussed in this article are based on the below-average pupil and reveal the extra interest being shown in helping him realize his maximum potential.

## Increased Staff Services

In recent years there have been an increased number of services to schools in high transiency areas and in areas of overcrowding. Among these services are the following:

- Master teachers are freed of classroom responsibilities in order to work with beginning teachers or substitutes. Such master teachers are assigned to schools having large numbers of newly assigned personnel.
- Special service teachers are placed in schools having high pupil-teacher ratios because adequate classroom space is not available. Special service teachers work with small groups of children in coaching situations,

**and assist the classroom teachers in any other way designated by the principal.**

**• Psychological service is offered in the summer to test pupils who were not tested during the school year.**

**• Reading clinics are provided for remedial readers—one per district—and are operated during the regular school day.**

**• After-school reading clinics are provided in disadvantaged communities to serve pupils who cannot attend clinics during the regular school day.**

**• After-school libraries are used as homework rooms in communities lacking public libraries.**

**• After-school reading and arithmetic groups are formed in certain schools having large numbers of pupils too old for their present grade placement.**

**• Free bus service is provided during school hours for trips of an educational nature.**

**• Cultural coordinator services are available to provide free and low-cost cultural opportunities in the performing arts and tours to enrich the children's experiential background.**

**• Reading and other subject matter consultant services are available to local schools.**

**• Theme-reader programs, more extensive reading by students, more independent study of grammar and usage, and more individual student-teacher conferences are encouraged.**

## District and Local School Programs

**Adaptability and flexibility in the use of the curriculum framework permit the custom-tailoring of the educational program in each subject to meet the needs of the local situations and the needs of the individuals.[1]**

**Implementing this policy, each of the 21 districts in the Chicago Public Schools develops districtwide and schoolwide programs to improve the quality of instruction. Among such programs are:**

**• Increasing numbers of schools using the continuous development (nongraded primary) plan in the first 2 to 4 years of school attendance. This plan, in an elementary school of 2,800 pupils—1,500 of whom are in the continuous development program—has resulted in acceleration for both the rapid learner and the slow learner, with the former completing the**

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[1] ***Elementary Education in the Chicago Public Schools.*** **Chicago: Bureau of Curriculum Development, May 1959.**

**sequences sooner and the latter completing the sequences without being retarded 2 to 4 semesters in his first 3 years.**

- **Cultural enrichment given to the most capable pupils through greater variety of books, increased emphasis on bulletin boards, increased emphasis on written reports, a weekly class newspaper, and dramatization.[2]**
- **Opportunity classes to help Spanish-speaking pupils. These classes seek to teach a new way of life, to provide practice in using English, and to help the child learn English well enough to be enrolled in a regular classroom.[3]**
- **Summer programs for remedial pupils who attend school 1 hour per day for 8 weeks.[4]**
- **Orientation rooms for pupils enrolling from the southern, rural areas, or for incoming pupils whose achievements are not up to those of the class into which they should be placed. Such rooms usually have a smaller number of students and a curriculum is usually designed to teach academic, social, citizenship, and family life skills.**
- **Ability grouping in reading and arithmetic.**
- **Divisional plan of instruction wherein the language program is divided into three areas—speech, composition, spelling; literature; work skills—each with its own teacher. The librarian, serving as a resource person, meets with the group perusing literature.[5]**
- **Tutoring services given by students of a local university.**
- **Special English programs at the high school level for the disabled reader, which stress the attainment of skill in reading, along with other language arts skills.**
- **District studies, made by principals' committees as a part of district inservice programs. Such studies are typical of the professional efforts being made year after year, as each district superintendent works to improve the educational program in his own community. Examples are: (1) District Eight Curriculum Center Bulletin Number One, "An Evaluation of Available Educational Materials Suitable for Over-Age Elementary School Pupils With Low Reading Ability."[6] (2) District Fourteen study, "Language Experience Program for the Linguistically Deprived," which not only identifies several types of linguistically deprived students who appear in our schools, but also develops a plan of attack for the classroom teacher; leadership techniques for the principal; slides with correlated tapes for inservice training; and a kit of materials, books, games, and manipulative devices for use in local schools which are trying to improve the language arts skills in more constructive ways than through workbooks.**

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[2] **Mary Virginia Kelly. "Supplemental Reading Program for the Middle Grades,"** ***Chicago Schools Journal.*** **Vol. XLI, No. 4, January 1960. p. 177 ff.**

[3] **Norma and Boyle James Rodriques. "Opportunity Classes Help Spanish-Speaking Pupils,"** ***Chicago Schools Journal.*** **Vol. XLIII, No. 5, February 1962. p. 228 ff.**

[4] **Mildred Rosenberg. "Summer Program for Remedial Pupils,"** ***Chicago Schools Journal.*** **Vol. XXXX, No. 8, May 1959. p. 382 ff.**

[5] **Gloria W. Williams. "Teaching Language Arts on a Divisional Basis,"** ***Chicago Schools Journal.*** **Vol. XXXIX, Nos. 5–6, January-February 1958. p. 146 ff.**

[6] **Ursula Maethner. "Locating and Evaluating Books for Slow Readers,"** ***Chicago Schools Journal.*** **Vol. XXXVII, Nos. 9–10, May-June 1956. p. 265 ff.**

## Experimental Programs in District Eleven

As pointed out earlier, each of Chicago's 21 districts initiates programs to improve instruction within the district. Sometimes, through foundation funds secured by the general superintendent of schools, special projects can be developed. Two of these projects are underway in District Eleven.

First, The Doolittle Project is a cooperative activity of the National College of Education in Evanston, Ill., and the James R. Doolittle Elementary School, financed by a grant to the college by the Wieboldt Foundation.[7] It seeks to:

- Promote the optimum development of each pupil in a culturally deprived community through improving the influences of the school, the home, and the community.
- Increase the skill of teachers in providing democratic experiences within the classroom.
- Provide consultant services for teachers interested in examining their own attitudes, as reflected in their teaching practices, and pupil attitudes, as reflected in pupil behavior.
- Suggest a framework of value categories which are important to each child and which furnish an improved method for thinking and planning in the areas of curriculum, classroom climate, discipline policy, parent education, and group dynamics. These values include: *power*—participation in the making of important decisions; *respect*—treatment consistent with human dignity; *enlightenment*—information one needs to make important decisions; *skill*—full development of one's own ability; *well-being*—good mental and physical health; *rectitude*—good moral practices and ethical standards; *affection*, and *economic security*.

Children who have been in the program for 3 years are showing more security and greater mental maturity than those not included. Teachers, too, have developed improved techniques for helping children with emotional and academic problems.

Second, the Special Project (Great Cities School Improvement Program) financed by the Ford Foundation and the Chicago Board of Education, seeks to provide wider experiences in and out of school for the culturally deprived child who is overage for his grade. Special classes, with smaller class sizes, special teaching personnel to reinforce the classroom teachers, special equipment, special after-school and Saturday classes, special counselors—including a work-study counselor—are provided for pupils from 14 to 17 years of age who are still in elementary school.

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[7] Kathleen Cooney. "Attention to Social Values Improves Climate for Learning," *Chicago Schools Journal.* Vol. XLIII, No. 4, January 1962. p. 181 ff.

In the area of language arts one may find teachers developing integrated units based on interest and social maturity rather than on basic texts and workbooks. Such units, well liked by the children and in written form, now include: catalog buying, newspapers, student council (government), and credit and installment buying.

Between 4 and 6 p.m., classes with a variety of activities are conducted for three age groups in several school buildings. None of these activities are recreational in nature. Those pertaining directly to the language arts are: reading clinic (ages 14 to 17 years); reading group (ages 14 to 17 years); communications arts laboratories (ages 11 to 13 years); urban 4-H (using library and reading and speaking activities—ages 11 to 13 years); civil service examination preparation (basic reading skills for dropouts—ages 16 to 21).

## Summary

The Chicago program in language arts provides a basic program for all pupils, at the same time encouraging individual districts, schools, and teachers to recognize special needs by making special adaptations. Many services to pupils and teachers have been added in the last few years in order to assure excellence in education for the fast, average, or slow learner.

District studies and experimental programs reflect the effort being made in Chicago to overcome the disadvantaged pupil's handicap. In addition to the documented findings obtained from test scores of special programs (such as summer schools and reading clinics), one may find an evaluation in the faces of children who are no longer apathetic, but are alert, self-confident, and inquiring about science, cultural pursuits, and community life.

That each one be all that he is capable of is the goal of the many projects and programs currently underway in Chicago.

# The Teacher—
# Qualifications and Training

# Selection and Preparation of Teachers To Serve in Schools in Culturally Different Areas

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**In any educational program, the teacher is the key; the child, the personality to be freed. Always and forever there are those who say with gratitude and affection, "There was a teacher. . . ."**

**If one had free choice, he would scour the city for master teachers for these children of limited background in order to find for each child:**

- **A teacher dedicated as a clergyman, selfless as a family doctor, sensitive as an artist, skillful as a master craftsman, ready as a good parent to understand, to sacrifice, to serve, to support, to forgive.**
- **A teacher committed to the faith that, while no child is exactly like another, for each the level of achievement can be raised, aspirations stirred, potential talents discovered and developed.**
- **A teacher bound in conscience to help each child find his own worth, his own dignity.**

**The NEA's recent report *Education and the Disadvantaged American* describes the teacher of disadvantaged children thus:**

> **The effective teacher of disadvantaged children is constantly aware of the circumstances that affect his pupils. He has the understanding and sympathy that prevent him from being repelled by deviations from his own standards. Instead of being struck by the shortcomings of his pupils, he is encouraged by their ability, despite their handicaps, to do as well as they do. The small successes of his least privileged pupils are praiseworthy in his eyes, and his praise is an invaluable motivating force for the children. The teacher's respect is the secret of contact between child and school.[1]**

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[1] **Educational Policies Commission, *Education and the Disadvantaged American*. Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1962. p. 19–20.**

Fortunately, in the eight schools in our program for disadvantaged children we have teachers of this type. We didn't hunt for them. They were there, had been there, had stayed in a kind of awful loneliness because they felt needed and wanted. Outnumbering them were the newly appointed teachers and those of limited experience. These have potential; they are eager to learn. Finally we have the substitute teachers who fill the vacancies, for as older, more experienced teachers retire, it is not easy to replace them in schools in deteriorating neighborhoods. Not many teachers live in these slum areas—though some few were born there. Too many false prophets predict disaster to novice teachers who might venture into difficult schools.

In Philadelphia teachers are appointed from eligibility lists. We do not have right of choice for the schools in the project. We take what we get. Since we may not select, we train those we get and retrain those we have through an intensive, carefully structured in-service program given during the school day without loss of instructional time for the children.

The children of limited background—a ratio of 1 in 3 pupils in the schools of the great cities of America which will change to 1 in 2 by 1970—will doom the cities if something isn't done about them. These are the children—underachievers, underaspirers, culturally impoverished—with whom in eight schools in Philadelphia, we are working with the help of the Ford Foundation as part of the Great Cities School Improvement Program. If these children are to be helped, we must find or train more teachers like those described above.

The general aims we have set are the simple goals of all good teachers:

- To raise the achievement level of each child.
- To raise his aspirational level.
- To enrich his cultural background.
- To find and to develop potential talent.
- To involve parents and community.

We seek to achieve these ends not in new or startling ways, but rather by a rededication to the principles of good teaching, an intensification of effort, a more creative use of available personnel and resources, an appreciative acceptance of additional resources made available by the Ford Foundation, and more imaginative utilization and training of staff.

As plans for the teaching of children and the orientation of teachers unfolded, we had these strong convictions to guide us:

- The potential of children of limited background far exceeds their performance.

- Each child—not children in the mass—must be given a sense of his own worth and dignity.
- The attack should be on many fronts, but a major emphasis must be in the language arts with special attention to reading.
- By "climbing inside their skins and walking around in them for a while," we may understand how to work more successfully with these children.
- Teachers, with help, will prove our convictions valid.

The strength of these convictions did not blind us to the severe language handicaps and cultural deficiencies with which these children of limited background come to school. Their vocabularies are incredibly limited, except for obscenities and curse words which even kindergarten children use. A word like *steeple* they do not know, though seven are visible from their classroom window.

The above-cited convictions and difficulties were kept in mind as plans were made to change the instructional program and train teachers. In general during the school day, the program functioned through a combination of team teaching, demonstration teaching, inservice classes, and traditional classroom teaching. Somewhat unique were the intensive inschool, inservice teacher training program and the language arts laboratory. From these two sources concrete help, inspiration, new ideas, and experiments found their way into every classroom through a very carefully structured program.

To carry out the goals, the staff of each school was reorganized around a school-community coordinating team. The team included the principal, selected teachers, language arts laboratory teacher, counselor, school nurse, and school-community coordinator. Each team made plans during a summer workshop in 1960, and during the summer of 1961 evaluated and made more plans for 1961–62. During the school year the team provided leadership, but entire staffs were involved. Each school provided a language arts laboratory for experimentation with small groups of children and a massive inschool, inservice program for teachers.

Additional personnel for each school included a language arts laboratory teacher and a school-community coordinator. The language arts laboratory teacher, selected from the school staff, played an important part in the teacher-training program. Two teachers were released from regular assignment to act as consulting teachers to assist new appointees and substitute teachers. Finally, to head up the entire language arts program for the children and to provide leadership in the training of teachers, one of the most creative language arts consultants in the city was freed to work exclusively with the eight schools. This year she was provided with an assistant.

## Language Arts Consultant

The language arts consultant has the key role and meets weekly during the school day with small groups of teachers from a certain grade. While she is working with these teachers, their classes are gathered in large groups under the direction of the language arts laboratory and reading adjustment teacher for a carefully planned program of literature appreciation. The help given the teachers is practical, concrete, specific. It is designed to test our convictions and to meet the language handicaps of the pupils. The teachers are given materials, shown how to use them, and then helped to use them in the classroom. The topics covered are handwriting (which is an area that is specific and where success can be quickly seen), spelling, reading, functional writing, and speech. The inservice work is followed by classroom visits, demonstrations, and teacher conferences.

When the language arts consultant meets with the eight language arts laboratory teachers, she gives intensive help in the material covered in the inservice courses, with special emphasis on the particular problems involved in working with nonverbal children and with children who have potential for much better work than their class performance indicates. The purpose is to train for each school a teacher strong enough to carry on the program if the consultant should be withdrawn. The language arts laboratory teacher, then, not only uses what she learns in her experimental groups in the laboratory, but also helps other teachers apply what they have learned in their inservice sessions.

The language arts consultant also trains a team in each school (made up of the reading adjustment teacher, the language arts laboratory teacher, and other available teachers) to administer the extensive testing program, to give individual reading inventories, and to group children in the various classes according to reading level. She is used as a consultant for faculty meetings, staff meetings, home and school association meetings.

She trains a group of Future Teachers of America from a nearby high school to assist the elementary teachers during the last hour of the school day. She teaches these girls manuscript writing and guides them in preparing materials for use in independent reading activities. She teaches them story-telling and poetry reading. From her these future teachers catch an enthusiasm for teaching; from the children they glimpse the rewards of teaching. They learn to respect these children of limited background and will, we hope, eventually return to teach them.

The consultant modifies old techniques and produces new ones. She improvises; she adapts; she creates. She produces a prodigious amount of concrete material to be used in class. She distributes it lavishly and, because it is practical, it is used.

### Language Arts Laboratory Teacher

Working in close cooperation with the language arts consultant is the language arts laboratory teacher. She is regularly scheduled to go into classrooms on a planned basis and, as a followup of the in-service work, to demonstrate, confer with teachers, and make suggestions in all areas of the language arts. Together with the reading adjustment teacher she plans and teaches the lessons in appreciation given the children while their teachers are with the language arts consultants. She also helps the teachers to plan and followup these lessons.

Included in her equipment is a language arts laboratory. Each language arts laboratory is provided with many books on all levels, tape recorders, record players, records, and the best teacher available from each staff.

While the programs varied somewhat from school to school, each school experimented with two small groups of children. The enrichment group was made up of 20 to 25 fifth and sixth graders selected on the basis of potential talent; the other was made up of young children, the nonverbals, who in the past were among the children designated as "poor risks." Several schools, in addition, had small groups experimenting with concept building: one school worked with a small group of disturbed children, one with a small experimental science group, and one with a parents' discussion group.

### Reading Adjustment Teacher

The reading adjustment teacher, a regular member of the staff whose major task is working with small groups of retarded readers, also assists teachers to improve their teaching of reading by demonstrating for them, teaching with them, and conferring with them. She further assists by working with the children on the lowest reading levels.

### Consulting Teachers

The two consulting teachers do not have major responsibility for the language arts as such, but they help the inexperienced and substitute teachers to establish a classroom atmosphere favorable to teaching. Consulting teachers assist inexperienced and substitute teachers to:

- Master the techniques of planning, teaching, classroom management, and control.
- Realize that discipline is a way of teaching, that the establishment of routines and a closely structured program help these pupils to learn.
- Understand the children and the community; in one school this understanding was furthered by a tour of the neighborhood.
- Structure their programs to make maximum use of time.
- Realize how important it is to maintain skills in all areas; that reading, writing, and listening are taught not only in periods labeled language arts, but also as they are applied in social studies, science, arithmetic.
- Realize that basic agreement among all who work with children helps all; that if standards are set and consistently followed in every classroom, in every situation, all are helped and the children most of all.
- Resolve personal problems of dress, speech, and manners.
- Become familiar with the practical aspects of teaching, use of materials, room decorations, and audiovisual aids.
- Keep and interpret records, give and make diagnostic use of standard tests.

The consulting teachers work closely with the principals. They give help by demonstrating, conferring, encouraging, and supporting the language arts consultant.

To summarize, we might say that the training program for teachers in the eight Philadelphia schools is not unlike the "house that Jack built." It starts with a group composed of the associate superintendent in charge, the district superintendent, the director of Philadelphia's Great Cities Improvement Program, the language arts consultant, and eight principals. This group meets monthly throughout the year to plan, evaluate, and replan. It moves on into each school through the school-community coordinating team. This team meets each summer and several times during the school term on Saturday in workshop sessions. In each school the training program, carefully structured, is put into effect by the language arts consultant, the language arts laboratory teacher, the reading adjustment teacher, and the consulting teachers—all working under the leadership of the principal who in turn keeps in close touch with the district superintendent, the director of the project, and the associate superintendent in charge.

Available evidence indicates the following results of the program:

- Interestingly, but not surprisingly, those teachers who have gained the most are those who brought the most—the master teachers. Given recognition, given help, working harder than ever, they have rededicated themselves to the joy of teaching. Their enthusiasm is infectious and has caught up all the teachers involved.
- We have had almost no requests for transfers from the eight schools during the past 2 years—a change from previous practice.
- Student teachers assigned to do practice teaching in these schools (in one of Philadelphia's oldest, most dilapidated, crime-ridden neighborhoods) have asked to be sent back when they were ready for appointment. Several are now teaching there.
- Vacancies have decreased.
- Standardized tests seem to indicate that children have improved in the basic language arts skills—some at a phenomenal rate, some not at all, but overall at a definite trend upward.

Our experience seems to show that:

- The success of the inservice training program depends, first, on the individuals selected to teach it. They must be skilled not only in subject matter and techniques, but also in human relations; must be able to win the master teacher and capture the inexperienced teacher. When, after watching a demonstration in the language arts laboratory, a teacher says "You couldn't do that with my class;" the inservice teacher must be able to go into the class and do it. Such people are rare but they can be found.
- Programs for children of limited background must be structured yet leave room for flexibility and creativity. They must be planned to overcome the handicaps of the child of limited background and to help him realize his potential, to inspire him to stretch beyond the limitations of his environment.
- Programs for training teachers should be structured to match those of the children. Before presenting new materials or new methods, teachers must be trained to use them properly.
- Inservice work must be followed by classroom demonstrations.
- After teachers as well as children have tasted success, the desire for more success follows.

- It is wise to train in each school a teacher so strong that she could take over if the leader should be withdrawn.

Our experience of the past 2 years leads us to believe that teachers, both master and inexperienced, can be helped on the job to work more successfully with children of limited background. We feel strongly, however, that the teacher training institutions should come to grips with this aspect of teaching, that they have the responsibility to prepare selected young people in the gray areas of the great cities, to teach them the "how" as well as the "what" of teaching, above all to inspire them to dedicate their lives to the students of the city slums, who without good teachers will never reach their full potential.

In conclusion, I should like to quote a rhyme written by a child in the enrichment group of one of the schools, for it summarizes most poignantly the urgency to find teachers ready to help the child of limited background.

Mr. Slow Man

I saw a little slow snail
He wasn't going fast.
He shook his little tail at me,
I saw his head at last.

Oh, you little slow snail,
Why are you so slow?
Why don't you move faster?
Why don't you just go-go?

The teacher is the key. Find the teacher, help him, and he in turn will help each child to move faster. Each child will "go-go" as far, as wide, as high as his innate gifts, his acquired skills, his aspirations, and his drive will take him. Then each child, as he succeeds in throwing off the yoke of a bad environment, the burden of a poor inheritance, will say, "There was a teacher. . . ." And that is our reward.

# Personal and Professional Qualifications for Teachers of Culturally Different Youth

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TO BE A professional, the teacher should know the reasons for his instructional activities. Teachers of classes of predominantly culturally different children are forced to examine the reasons for teaching what they teach and how they teach if they are to be effective. Such a self-examination is an absolute necessity for those professionals whose major responsibilities are directed toward the alteration of human behavior. Even when the reasons for structured learning experiences are not explained to the child, teachers must know them if they are to have a chance of success.

The opinions expressed here relate to the qualifications and professional understandings needed by teachers of the child who is culturally deprived or culturally different. One such understanding could be labeled "cultural disassociation," which is used here to mean a general freedom from all of the usual assumptions about characteristics and their causal relationships. If there is any area in which folk wisdom has been most influential and inaccurate, it is in describing the causes, symptoms, characteristics, and effects of cultural identifications. This attitude of cultural disassociation means a deliberate intellectual and emotional revolution which frees the individual from all the assumptions of this folk wisdom.

This folk wisdom will result in the loss, to an overwhelming extent, of what are inaccurate or at least unproductive ideas. The teacher will not have to know all cultures in order to arrive at this stage of disassociation, but he will have to become culturally "sophisticated," a condition which is fostered by a broad educational experience in that area of anthropology now identified as culture and personality. Through these experiences, the teacher can begin to acquire the attitudes and the intellectual commitments which will cause him to be wary of any generalization about what is normal; will cause him to be aware, in an accurate and perceptive manner, of his own value systems; will cause him to be capable of entertaining variant value systems and customs without shock or the weakening of his own beliefs; and will produce in him a growing realization that among all cultures and subcultures the areas of agreement about fundamentals are more numerous than the areas of disagreement—that even where there are strong disagreements, there are numerous possibilities of cultural accommodations.

A second related area of needed understanding involves a professional decision that is a matter of cultural relativism. This is the old question of whether we are leading all children toward the middle-class complex of values and attitudes, or whether we are trying to develop what seem to be the unique qualities of each subculture within our society. We are torn between the melting-pot concept of what happens from the intermingling of variant cultures and the fear that uniformity is often extracted not through the intermixture of favorable elements from many cultures, but through the development of one cultural pattern to the utter supression of others and a consequent loss of some richness and values in our society. There is also the more subtle question of the morality and psychological soundness in choosing between either the promotion of the values to which most school teachers are attached or the development of a kind of suspended judgment which allows whatever may be the strongest features of various subcultures to flourish in order to observe the consequences.

There is the further question as to whether there are such subcultures--whether we are engaging in either a kind of esoteric activity in preserving what may be archaic or a kind of rationalization of second-class cultural as well as political citizenship when we foster a protectiveness for the cultural group that may be exhibiting behaviors that come from inferior sources rather than from the flowering of enriching variations in cultural behavior. The integration of the most effective elements of various interacting cultures has gone on through man's existence, if history and anthropology are correct in their findings. Thus, it would be ridiculous to think that this interaction and integration would not continue inside of our American society, which has interwoven a wide variety of cultural resources to add to its strength and richness.

Teachers of culturally different children should also be acquainted with many recent sociological analyses of the class structure in this country which point out the marked differences between our actual behavior and professed ideals, and also the even more marked differences between the professed ideals and norms of the socioeconomic classes from which the culturally deprived children tend to come and those which are the stereotyped expectations of the middle-class oriented school system. For middle-class children the school culture is a reflection of their whole culture; but this condition is not true for children who, because of social and economic history, have become what is called culturally deprived. The teacher of these children must realize, furthermore, that this cultural deprivation is not a deliberate selection among alternative value systems, but rather is the acceptance of the only set of values the home has within its reach. The teacher must decide, without emotional distortion, that the values represented in the school culture have been deliberately chosen because they do seem to be ones which will be most prevalent in the predictable future. Therefore, it is an educational obligation of the school to transmit these attitudes and values to all children.

It is the function of the school neither to form social values nor to follow blindly the dictates of the community, but rather to engage in the risky but necessary job of deliberately selecting from among the characteristics of the prevailing culture those which seem to be best and most genuine in terms of its traditions and in terms of its foreseeable future. It is to these values that the child's attention must be directed, and it is his lack of acquaintance with these values that we most often label as the symptoms of cultural deprivation.

The teacher of these children must remind himself constantly (as a third area of understanding) that in the American commitment to education there is no allowance for the exemption of any child from the full process of education. He must build on the implication made by some educational psychologists that, by the time a child gets, for example, to the secondary level, the chances that he is mentally incapable of profiting from many secondary school experiences are fewer than one out of a thousand. Therefore, we assume the educability of all human beings. This type of concept has to be more than an emotional evocation of what ought to be; it should be the acceptance of the evidence of science and of logic that all human beings can learn. This means, therefore, that all human beings can be taught. This means that a teacher, as an organizer of the educational experiences for a child who is not yet mature enough to organize his own experiences, is committed to the task of finding out what experiences can be organized in the manner that will be most meaningful to the child, and be willing to attribute the child's failure to learn to the inadequacy of educational planning.

Fourth, the teacher of the culturally deprived, like all other teachers, must become aware of the need to focus upon the goal of having pupils acquire an understanding of the concepts and structure in areas of knowledge and not merely the accumulation of data. I advance the proposition that children who are not academically inclined will become concerned and interested in the basic interrelationships of knowledge and the meaning of those interrelationships for action, behavior, and attitudes even though they cannot develop an interest in the accumulation of what we often call scholarly data. The accumulation of information for its own sake or in pursuit of an intellectual hobby is not often encouraged during the childhood of the less privileged. A teaching program which is restricted to or built on these objectives will fail to interest such children. A curriculum built on the search for insights into genuine problems is much more likely to strike a universal human response.

The teacher must choose the kind of content which is most fertile in leading these children to the goals that are determined for their educational programs. He must be willing to engage in a reexamination of the entire gamut of instructional practices, permitting no practice to go unexamined because of any assumption of its established excellence or its hallowed tradition. This type of reexamination is now going on for English, science, mathematics, social studies, and other subjects; but there is often a tendency for the average teacher to accept the new labels without making a change to the meaningful activities represented by the labels. Teachers of culturally different youth must find a way to relate the planned educational experiences to the immediate perceptions of the child for the purpose of developing the kinds of insights which will be intellectually useful throughout his life. These will include ideas and theories to undergird the instructional content presented to students.

Fifth, the teacher of these children must become acutely aware of two problem areas represented by the well-worn phrases, *the inner-city* and *the American dilemma*. These two sociological terms represent significant changes that are occurring in our social system. These changes have a direct effect upon educational planning for the culturally different child as well as for all other chlidren. Both terms not only suggest the problems of the greatest proportion of our culturally deprived children but also represent the major types of social pressures which are bringing about a drastic change in our total culture. We know that the inner-city refers to the situation in which our cities are becoming the refuse heap into which only those people who cannot help themselves are thrown, in contrast to the usual pattern which has existed from the time of Athens to New York City in the early 1900's, when the central portion of the city contained the major institutions which perpetuated the culture. Such institutions included the churches, the established families, the privately endowed schools, the museums, theatres, and opera houses. Until recently most of these institutions have been losing ground or moving to the periphery of the city. The American dilemma, of course, is this traumatic contrast between the sincere commitments of our country and the tragically different practices in terms of race relations and, even more profoundly, in terms of those racial attitudes which persist long after the external practices of discrimination have been diminished in number and strength. The teacher needs to acquire valid sociological information about these two phenomena, needs to know that they represent basic elements in our culture, not foreign factors, and needs to have the emotional balance which will make it possible to confront these two situations and extract from them the best possible solutions rather than ignore them or merely decry them.

The sixth important understanding involves a realistic view of the sources of motivation in our society which are used ordinarily to encourage a child to continue in school. The reality of the situation is that in the public secondary school love of learning is not generally a source of such motivation. Most children in our school systems are encouraged to remain in school by other sources of motivation, such as:

1. The pressure of a traditional family pattern which emphasizes schooling.
2. The clear, definite, unmistakable promise of an occupational future which will be enhanced by continuation in school.
3. The presence of a community attitude toward school which makes any decision other than to continue in school almost beyond conception.
4. The provision of conditions within the school which are more pleasant than those outside the school.

It is apparent that these four sources of motivation are inadequate to make the culturally deprived, who are also the racially underprivileged in this country, want to pursue formal education. Schooling tends not to have been a major feature of their family histories. Discrimination in employment is as well known to these children as to their parents. The school is not likely to be considered more than just a distant institution to most of the families from which these children come. The bitter fact is that the schools for these children tend to be the least attractive, least flexible, and most sterile of all schools. The teacher of these children, therefore, must be aware of the crucial importance of providing experiences in the school curriculum to counteract the deficiencies in the four sources of motivation listed above. There is no use in resorting to mere exhortation or to a kind of fatalistic and exasperated denunciation of attitudes which are inevitable consequences of the social and economic deprivations of these children.

The teacher of these children must acquire a new kind of tolerance.

Tolerance has often meant the forbearance of a person who knows that what he "tolerates" is inferior but who realizes that his own creed or status requires that he display this particular attitude. This kind of "tolerance" is not disguised easily, and children in all situations are more acutely aware of the true emotions of their teachers than they may be of the intellectual content of their curriculums. They react, therefore, in a predictable manner when confronted with this attitude. The presence of either tolerance or open hostility will not do the kind of job that is necessary in trying to teach these children. Understanding must develop from the kind of intellectual insights that cultural anthropology can provide—the kinds of insights which indicate the commonality of many of the basic and approved goals among men.

Also, there is the problem of the significance of the lower median IQ's which are found in groups of the culturally deprived. With few exceptions, people now accept the fact that this lower median IQ is not hereditary. They do not always, however, accept the implication of the alterability of this IQ even when they accept the fact that it is acquired. There is a pessimism about the degree to which this IQ can be raised which can come from despair as well as from prejudice. The teacher of such children needs to know fully and clearly that an IQ is a quotient derived from the relationship between mental age and chronological age and that, although the ingredients of mental age and chronological age are certainly hereditary, the actual history of both is a social phenomenon. Man can manipulate, although he cannot alter, the basic elements involved in both. Just as through nutrition he can make the effects of chronological age more beneficial and imposing, so through education he can make the history of the mental age more significant and fertile.

A basic pedagogical decision must be made about what is to be taught the slow learner, because a census of the slow learners of this country will reveal that the overwhelming majority of them are also those who could be defined as culturally deprived. We have resorted usually to one of two escapes. We have said that these children should receive vocational education on a minimal level usually referred to as "shop work," or we have said that they should have "interesting" activities which will use up the school day but will not impose any intellectual burden.

I think that both of these attitudes are mistaken, and I feel that they are misguided to a dangerous degree. The teacher of these children must come to a general understanding that the central purpose of the public school program, kindergarten through grade 12, is the development of general education. This is not generalized or miscellaneous education, but the core of common learnings which are meaningful to man and which are essential to effective participation in the present-day world. The teacher of these children must also accept the applicability of the field theories of learning to slow as well as to average students. There is sometimes the assumption that these children, being slower learners, are less effective at conceptualization and that, therefore, the stimulus-response bond theories of learning are more applicable to them. The perception of the whole and the search for insight are relevant in all learning processes for all human beings. A teacher who does not follow these psychological principles runs two dangers: (1) Not offering the most effective kinds of instruction, and (2) dealing in far too many cases with children whose apparent intellectual abilities are far lower than their actual ones.

The teacher of these children must also be aware professionally of the obvious but often ignored fact that the curve of distribution of academic abilities in school children is a continuum rather than a series of discrete and different units. Unless this fact is constantly kept in mind there is a readymade tendency on the part of even the best-intentioned teachers to make assumptions about groups of so-called slow learners or culturally deprived without remembering that these assumptions represent perhaps a median, less often a mean, but definitely not the total range of the actual characteristics found in any particular identified group. There is, furthermore, the constant danger of assuming that there are certain cultural needs which are only important to the genuine middle class, the vocationally destined professional class, or the children of superior academic achievement who are going to college. The need for the ability to respond to certain understandings of emotional as well as intellectual experiences which come from the most sophisticated elements in our culture are found in *all* groups of learners. Programs such as the Higher Horizons Program in New York City have demonstrated this. Many authorities still say that the present programs for cross-cultural understandings are of a nature which do not put knowledge about people in a central place in the curriculum but rather append it as a kind of enrichment offering attached as an after-thought.

There is a definitely recorded tendency on the part of many of the teachers in our schools to concentrate their attention on academic performance of the middle-class child and to be most surprised at the disciplinary problems that may seem to come almost exclusively from the lower-class child. The teacher then, of course, tends to base his evaluations of the child's work and decisions about instructional procedures upon the child's nonconforming behavior. The relative absence of middle-class family structures, the infrequency of meaningful church affiliations, the tendency to look upon the law enforcement agencies of the community as either hostile or indifferent, and the tendency to have a set of social outlets which are markedly different from the traditional ones of the middle class—these are all factors which must affect our actions, evaluations, and anticipations as teachers. Consider the implications of this sociological statement in *Elmstown's Youth:* "The social behavior of adolescents is related functionally to the position their families occupy in the social structure of the community."[1] This sentence has all of the key understandings so important in this situation. Think of the phrases "social behavior," "related functionally," and "position in the social structure." Teachers must become totally aware of the implications of the fact that there is a social structure in our community which is divided into classes of varying openness and that the overt behaviors, if not the inner values, of people are affected by their position in the social structure of the community. Teachers must realize that the social structure in and of itself has been dominated by the mystique of the middle class and that this really represents merely the total construction of values found in the middle distribution of our class structure —not the ideal set of values to which our best literature and documents give expression.

These understandings must be attained first on a theoretical level by the potential teacher. Then, somehow or other, the teacher must have firsthand experiences in working with these children as a part of this preparation for the profession. The fact that a teacher may come from a lower socioeconomic group is not a substitute for this field experience because the tendency of such a future teacher is to be influenced far more by the ideology of the middle class, whose code he wants to acquire, than by the memory of the class standards in which he has grown up. Only by having some type of planned educational experiences of his own where he can observe systematically or participate fully in the social welfare or educational programs that involve these young people will he understand what Hollingshead means when he says: "The effects of differential learning in the home and the neighborhood during the childhood years are the basic conditioning factors which give rise to the highly significant differences in social behavior observed among the adolescents in the different classes."[2] The teacher of these children must realize that social research examines human behavior in terms of functional relationships —in terms of dynamics rather than in terms of statics.

And finally, the teacher must accept the significance of "social behavior" in the educational process. This is something which is very difficult to acquire and which represents one of the great contributions of the much maligned progressive movement in education. For a time this emphasis provided a kind of protective screen under which poor teachers could teach anything or nothing at all, but now there is a growing pressure to return to the old tradition of subject-centered instruction. Leaders in many school systems are reasserting that the primary purpose of education is to develop the intellect. This aim is good, but it is harmful when we couch the assertion in terms of a return to the traditional approaches, traditional evaluations, and traditional activities which never at any time in our educational history provided an effective device for teaching children who were deviates from the middle-class norm. Yet in our desperation these approaches are being identified as a return to the fundamentals and the basic essentials. Accompanying this movement, whether we are willing to acknowledge it or not, will be a return to the age-old device of failure and discharge from school as the way to solve the problem of teaching a large part of our school population. If this happens I feel that we will be forced to abandon the policy by the public pressures to control the social orientation of all of our children or else we will face the danger of having the most aggressive portion of our underprivileged society, much of it urban-centered, developed under influences which are genuinely anti-American, anti-democratic, and antihumanistic.

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[1] August B. Hollingshead, *Elmstown's Youth.* New York: John Wiley and Son, 1949, p. 439.

[2] Ibid., p. 441.

Hollingshead also reminds us that the American caste system is extra-legal. Therefore, there is no way of using the simple process of legal pressure to cause a change in these structures. He warns us also that our class system assumes a relationship between a person's worth and his place in society, as indicated by his material success. He feels that the great challenge to American society in the second half of the 20th century is the changing of those aspects of our culture which foster and perpetuate the class system over against the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution and the ideals that they represent. Apparently he feels that this is an educational job. Teachers most immediately involved with children who are the victims of this dilemma will have to know that this educational process should come about, not through the alteration of American ideals or the overthrow of the American caste system, but rather through taking children who are disadvantaged and motivating their interest in acquiring the advantages which they do not have (which is tied in inextricably with at least a preliminary acceptance of the attitudes and values promoted by the present possessors of these advantages) and then, proceeding from there, to develop people who can acquire the characteristics which will help their essentially equal range of native abilities take greater advantage of increasingly equal opportunities.

Once this has been done, it will be necessary to realize that there is the possibility that the entrance of these people into our dominant cultural picture, with the freshness that comes from not having been born into it, may even, in their process of becoming acculturated, result in a fresh approach or an overhaul of whole sets of our values and customs which might lead to a healthier community for all. This is a kind of optimism which must not become mystical and thereby lead us to ignore the devices needed to promote this change. This change must not be denied because it is probably the last best hope for health and coordination in the urban cultures of America. This is the kind of belief to which teachers of culturally different children must commit themselves and which they must translate into effective practices.

Finally, there is an area of understandings which involves a realistic awareness of the evils of segregation and discrimination. This realism can be dramatized by reference to the title of Abram Kardiner's book *The Marks of Oppression*. Teachers of children who are classified as culturally different or culturally deprived must be careful not to develop a patronizing, missionary attitude. This attitude is developed often from what are, consciously, very fine motives; but it involves the fatal, unspoken weakness of being based upon a double standard of expectation. These teachers must know that all of the thoughtful commentators on cultural and racial problems in this country insist that those who work with Negroes, for example, must require and expect from them the same standards of performance that are expected from all other groups.

We have discussed several reasons why these expectations may not be satisfied readily, and I have urged that we have teachers who will not become frustrated or impatient with these children when their hopes are not satisfied. Nevertheless, the expectations must be the same and the indications of relative standing in school programs must be honest and forthright. When a Negro child, for example, achieves several grade levels lower than his white peer, this must be indicated frankly and not glossed over or weighted with some compensatory evaluations developed because of sympathy for the deprivations of the Negro child. To do otherwise does not contribute to the solutions of the problems of the Negro child nor to the development of a proper educational program for him. There are many "marks of oppression" which might affect the majority group, or even Negro teachers who tend to identify themselves with the majority middle-class group. One such mark is this tendency to set up double standards and to convince themselves that they are based upon a missionary zeal and sympathy for the underprivileged, when they are based really upon a reluctance to accept the proposition that all groups possess an equal range of abilities.

Among the many "marks of oppression" found upon the nonprivileged, the disadvantaged, underprivileged (or whatever other term we may want to use) are widespread evidences of hostility. Suffering does not improve men automatically. In most of us suffering tends to develop resentment or hostility, especially when the cause of the suffering cannot be presented convincingly to us as being divine in origin or moral in character. There are strong trends of hostility in many children in these groups to which we are referring. This feeling may be concealed through fear in ordinary situations, but it is likely to be demonstrated in any situation in which the child is approached by a representative of the established institutions of society with what seems to be an interest in his welfare. This behavior often is a great shock to the patronizing missionary who encounters not only what he may call ingratitude but even overt hostility from the recipients of his "charity." This attitude is often unacknowledged or at least unexamined by the underprivileged themselves. Evidences of it can be detected in aggressive mannerisms, loud voices, raucous laughter, sullen responses, short tempers, and suspicious examinations of favors or kindnesses.

The teacher of these children must become convinced thoroughly that in an open-class society such as ours cultural isolation of any kind is deleterious in its effects. He must face, finally, the stern conclusion that there are no compensatory characteristics for any practice of cultural isolation. He must be able to resist the numerous attempts either to justify actions or at least to pacify the culturally different by statements that cultural isolation is only temporary, that it has some benefits, or that it is to some extent natural or expedient. Cultural isolation is an evil state of affairs in any kind of society. It is most definitely a serious psychological evil in a society which in all other respects and in a large part of its traditions is an open-class society. We must remember that there have been many class systems in the history of the world in which the class lines themselves were drawn rigidly, but in which individuals were granted mobility when they could prove their worthiness by surviving an ordeal or making a contribution to society. This opportunity exists in America except for these very children whom we are labeling as culturally different. The situation may be changing more or less rapidly depending upon what areas one observes among our activities, but there still lingers the relative immobility in class movement for these young people. The "marks of oppression" must be anticipated by the teacher of these children and understood by him. The only way in which the teacher can be effective is to develop the firm conviction, based upon study, that segregation is evil.

Thus far, this paper has suggested 10 areas of understandings which are of crucial importance for the effectiveness of a teacher of culturally different children. I have tried to indicate that most teachers, regardless of origin or other sources of classification, consider themselves to be members of the middle-class, white, native, American social stratum and act accordingly. Any child who does not fit into this pattern is culturally different from the teacher. Any child who has a number of severe handicaps which make his chances of becoming identified with this particular culture rather remote is a child who is a problem to the teacher. These areas that I have stressed are significant areas in which teachers must have some understandings. Secondly, the teachers should have acquired some of the accumulated observations, scientifically determined data, and carefully evolved psychological and philosophical principles in these areas. Thirdly, they must have acquired convictions about these areas; otherwise, their effectiveness will be diminished and perhaps even nonexistent. We are faced with the grim challenge of demonstrating that the organized educational facilities of this country can develop worthy programs for the social orientation of all children, or we will have to surrender the orientation of what is becoming increasingly a significant and powerful element of our society to forces which may be actually destructive to our values and ideals.

In summary, the areas of understanding which teachers of the culturally different should acquire are these:

1. The understandings grouped under the label of cultural disassociation.

2. The understandings designated by the label of cultural relativism.

3. The conception of the implications of the necessity to educate all children of all of the people.

4. An awareness of recent approaches to education which emphasize the structure of knowledge and the unifying concepts in areas of knowledge.

5. An awareness of the educational as well as sociological implications of the problems associated with the inner-city and the American dilemma.

6. The problems related to the sources of motivation for children in our school systems and the adaptation of them for the benefit of culturally different children.

7. The development of an understanding of the proper implications of the word tolerance.

8. A clear understanding of the significance and limitations of the IQ score and the curricular decisions to be based upon this awareness.

9. An awareness of the effects of the class system in our country.

10. An emotional as well as intellectual understanding of the evils of segregation.

The professional preparation of the teachers of these children should be planned so as to provide the educational and personal experiences which will promote the proper command of the information related to these areas and the maximum opportunity to develop convictions in them. The preparation should include experiences in cultural anthropology and social psychology courses. It is not sufficient, however, to study courses with these labels unless they are directed toward the exploration of areas such as those listed above and go beyond the mere communication of information into the realm of convictions. This listing is not all-inclusive; it is simply an attempt to indicate some of the areas which seem to be of crucial importance for the teachers of children who are culturally different and who must somehow or other become positively oriented toward the neglected opportunities in our society.

# Appendix

# A Bibliography of Selected References on Culturally Different Youth

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**Cohn, Werner.** "On the Language of Lower-Class Children." *School Review.* 67: 435–440. Winter 1959.

Cohn considers the language of the lower class as a separate dialect related to, but distinct from, standard English. Lower-class English is used at times by higher classes for a variety of purposes. Teaching standard English to lower-class children involves more than technical problems of method. The purposes of standard English and formal learning ordinarily are unrelated to the self-image of the lower-class child. Cohn says that we fear lower-class language which actually has great power to express emotions; the more precarious our social status in the higher classes, the more insistent we are on the purity of our linguistic credentials.

**Conant, James Bryant.** *Slums and Suburbs.* New York: McGraw-Hill Company, Inc. 1961.

The role of the schools is of the utmost importance in the improvement of slum conditions. In a heavily urbanized and industrialized free society, the educational experiences of youth should fit their subsequent employment.

Two factors combine to cause difficulties in the curriculum and organization of the schools in large cities: large cities comprise many diverse neighborhoods, and the magnitude of the task complicates the public school situation. Latitude must be granted to the schools by the central office for curricular and instructional innovation to meet local needs. A major portion of the school day in an elementary school in a slum area should be devoted to reading skills.

A concentrated attack is being made upon a particular aspect of the school problem in slum areas in each of the seven cities involved in the Great Cities Gray Areas School Improvement Program. Conant recommends ability grouping in grades 7 through 12 in such subjects as English, social studies, mathematics, and science; three groups can be used. Many personnel problems exist in the large cities. Conant suggests that the slum schools need considerably more staff than schools in well-to-do neighborhoods. The turnover rate of teachers is high. Programs of inservice training for teachers are a necessity if the schools are to serve a positive function in the community.

**Dodson, Dan W.** "The Changing Neighborhood." *Educational Leadership.* 18: 497–501. May 1961.

The term "changing neighborhood" usually refers to the community in conflict because of altered relations among groups; alteration is accentuated by population movements. A number of promising practices have been used in dealing with changing neighborhoods. The "open enrollment" principle ameliorates some problems. Various kinds of grouping have been employed. The most effective programs result from the application of sound educational practices.

DRUDING, ALEDA. "Stirrings in the Big Cities: Philadelphia." *NEA Journal.* 51: 48–51. February 1962.

The article describes the program conducted at the Dunbar Elementary School under the auspices of the Great Cities School Improvement Project. Six goals were established at the beginning of the project: (1) To motivate parents to assume increasing responsibility for solution of family, community, and school problems, (2) to develop interest and understanding of the democratic way of life among parents by a program that coordinates the efforts of the school and all other social agencies, (3) to identify and meet unique and pressing social and cultural needs of families in communities, (4) to raise pupil achievement, (5) to provide opportunities for children to achieve recognition, security, and a sense of belonging, and (6) to decrease juvenile delinquency.

"East Side Story." *Times Educational Supplement.* No. 2331, Jan. 22, 1960, p. 116–117.

A school located in one of the poorest areas of London where violence is a natural mode of expression to the children is described. The school attempts to provide security, stability, and affection, and to compensate for lacks in the home. Each child writes a monthly review in which he may discuss anything which has interested him during the past month. Weekly council meetings are held by the forms which have proved themselves sufficiently responsible; discussions may include behavior problems, difficulties with lessons, or anything students consider unfair.

*Education and the Disadvantaged American.* Educational Policies Commission. Washington, D.C.: National Education Association. 1962.

Recommendations made by the Educational Policies Commission concerning children from culturally disadvantaged environments are discussed. The successful school program demonstrates to these children a close relationship between school and life; it includes the remedial services necessary for academic progress; and it arouses aspirations which can alter constructively the courses of young lives. The school must strive to overcome children's hostility to the school environment, helping them to develop a sense that education is related to their lives and purposes; and it must make every effort to help the child sense that the school is important to him. The teaching of reading in primary years should receive special emphasis in order to eliminate remedial work in later years.

The speech patterns of disadvantaged children differ so sharply that they impede their learning to read. Chances for success improve when speech therapy precedes or accompanies reading instruction. Reading materials and visual aids should take account of the backgrounds of the children who will use them. Both school and community activities can aid in extending the mental and physical horizons of children. A major purpose of teacher education is to provide the basis of the teacher's respect for the pupil and his awareness of the circumstances that affect his pupils.

The problems in disadvantaged areas are many and severe, and cannot be handled by the teacher alone. Thus the school has special needs for remedial teachers, guidance counselors, psychologists, psychiatrists, nurses, and school social workers to observe and work with children and to provide specialized help to teachers. The importance of parent education cannot be overstressed. The school should establish cooperative relationships with community agencies.

HAVIGHURST, ROBERT J. "Metropolitan Development and the Educational System." *School Review.* 69: 251–267. Autumn 1961.

Two major concerns are presented by metropolitan growth: (1) Increased segregation on the basis of income and race and (2) space not used properly. There is not only increased economic stratification in schools, but also increased racial and ethnic segregation. Segregation of lower-class children denies them stimulation of association with middle-class youth in the school and the classroom.

Socioeconomic characteristics of schools are related to important educational factors. A problem in the megalopolis is a weakening of civic and social relations between various socioeconomic groups. The status ratio is useful for studying the ethos of a school. Race index is an important indicator of desire of middle-class families to send their children to a particular school. Major educational adaptations to solve problems may include multitrack systems in schools, enrichment programs, and work-study programs. Urban renewal of a fundamental nature will require major developments in school policy. Transitional policies might call for regional high schools to serve the top third of the high school age group, work-study centers at the junior high level, general high schools with strong commercial and vocational training programs, special attention at the kindergarten-primary level to children from culturally and emotionally inadequate homes in order to give them a good start in school, regional junior colleges, and an adult education program on an areawide basis.

———. "Poor Reading and Delinquency May Go Hand in Hand." *Nation's Schools.* 64: 55–58. November 1959.

The greatest handicap a child can have is lack of mastery of reading. Children may get into trouble if they suffer from one or more of three kinds of deprivation: affectional deprivation—children do not receive sufficient love at home; model person deprivation—parents are poor models; and intellectual deprivation—neither reading nor stimulating conversation in the home. Havighurst recommends that children from deprived homes be located in kindergarten and placed in a group with peers where they remain until they have learned to read. Such a procedure is preferable to making the child repeat first grade or waiting until the child is in the upper grades and then giving him remedial reading instruction. Learning to read is a developmental task, and six, seven, and eight are the ages at which it should be mastered.

In the Quincy experiment, the teacher made several calls on parents. The united home-school front not only helped to solve disciplinary problems, but also helped to prevent them.

———. "Social-Class Influences on American Education." *Social Forces Influencing American Education.* Sixtieth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1961. p. 120–143.

The social structure of the United States is changing in the direction of an increasing proportion of middle-class people and a decreasing proportion in the lowest end of social scale. The schools give educational, economic, and cultural opportunities to large numbers of students and play an essential role in keeping the social structure fluid. There are some tendencies toward hardening of social structures and more rigid stratification particularly in metropolitan areas.

**Krugman, Morris.** "The Culturally Deprived Child in School." *NEA Journal.* 50: 23–24. April 1961.

Many children seriously handicapped educationally enter school in large metropolitan areas. An educational program designed for children from middle-class socioeconomic homes does not yield satisfactory results with deprived children. The Higher Horizons Program in New York City encompasses 65 schools. Experiences in six areas resulting from these programs seem particularly pertinent to the education of children from low socioeconomic homes:

(1) *Appraisal of ability and teacher outlook.* Teachers, reminded that group intelligence tests could not be taken at face value with deprived children, began to search for clues of ability and to lose their morbid outlooks about the children.

(2) *Early identification.* The original experiment began with a junior high school but later was extended to the early elementary years. Identification of talent and efforts at overcoming cultural handicaps must begin early.

(3) *Self-concepts, aspiration levels, and educational sights.* Educational and guidance approaches were used that would raise the children's opinions of themselves and their levels of aspiration.

(4) *Raising educational achievement.* Remedial services were provided when necessary; children were taught in small groups. As the children's greatest difficulty was in written and spoken English, two English classes were held each day.

(5) *Adequate guidance.* Intensive guidance service is essential, but it can never function effectively without intensive instruction.

(6) *Raising the cultural level.* Since culturally deprived children have little awareness of the world beyond their immediate neighborhood, they need opportunities to expand their experiences and appreciations.

**Lee, Ralph.** "Stirrings in the Big Cities: Detroit." *NEA Journal.* 51: 34–37. March 1962.

Describes Detroit's involvement in the Great Cities School Improvement Program. One senior high school, two junior high schools, and four elementary schools are taking part. Project workers are trying to develop a process in which teachers and parents reinforce each other in providing experiences for the children. Community agencies are involved also.

**Miller, Ingrid O.** "Education and Social Class." *Minnesota Journal of Education.* 42: 9–10. December 1961.

Education is, in part, a mirror of the social class system; it is also an agent of social change. Education appears to be more "responsive to social forces than responsible for them." Schools play an essential role in keeping the social structure fluid.

**Newton, Eunice Shaed.** "Verbal Destitution: The Pivotal Barrier to Learning." *Journal of Negro Education.* 29: 497–499. Fall 1960.

A consistent pattern of substandard English usage by the majority of the seriously inadequate students was observed in the Bennett College Reading Study Skills Center. Case studies of 10 seriously retarded students were made. The findings revealed: (1) All 10 were residents of the Southeastern region of country, (2) half lived in rural areas or in towns of fewer than 5,000, (3) communities offered no cultural experiences except for occasional programs sponsored by the Church or school, (4) parents were of the lower economic strata and had language patterns similar to those of students, and (5) the language patterns of other adults in the environment were primarily substandard English. Practices found to be valuable in working with verbally destitute students included these: (1) Classroom instruction should be free from derision and deprecation, (2) learning experiences must be specific, concrete, and meaningful, (3) opportunities should be provided for students to hear standard English usage, (4) the teacher must be optimistic, encouraging, buoyant, and energetic, (5) growth should be made apparent to students, (6) opportunities should be provided for students to exercise their developing language arts, and (7) the teacher must use techniques of "synonymity," restating a difficult term in many different, familiar ways.

**Ozmon, Howard A., Jr.** "A Realistic Approach to the Writing of Children's Textbooks for Deprived Areas." *Elementary English.* 30: 534–535. December 1960.

Teachers in deprived areas agree that texts used in privileged areas are not adequate for use in deprived areas, especially for early readers. Children in deprived areas come into contact at an early age with such unfortunate conditions as crime, poverty, and broken homes, and find nothing in their reading texts which relate to the world they know.

Textbook writers and publishers must use a realistic approach to the problem. Teaching reading to children in deprived areas is difficult enough in itself without complicating the problem with books that are uninteresting to the child and unrelated to his life.

**Smith, Richard C.** "This School Solves Its Own Problems." *Elementary School Journal.* 59: 75–81. November 1958.

Students in P.S. 120 in Brooklyn represent several languages and cultural groups. Some families are too impoverished to supply the basic needs of the children. Many children have physical or emotional problems. The school is overcrowded with 1,600 pupils enrolled, operating on three shifts. Regular classes are grouped on the basis of reading ability; half of the children in the "N-E" or non-English classes are from Puerto Rico and Latin American countries, and half are from the continental United States. Children who speak no English are assigned to "C" classes taught by Puerto Rican teachers. A staff adviser, who does not teach, handles problems which concern Puerto Ricans. Major problem areas are housing and health. Rapport has been established between the home and the school. The school conducts a sewing class for mothers; in each classroom one mother helps the teacher.

**Templin, Mildred C.** "Relation of Speech and Language Development to Intelligence and Socioeconomic Status." *Volta Review.* 60: 331–334. September 1958.

Several considerations are of some importance in attempting to assess the relationship of language development to intelligence and socioeconomic status: the various aspects of language and speech are distinct and separate and show varying relationships to intelligence and socioeconomic status; the measure of intelligence used produces varying results, and scores on most mental tests vary with socioeconomic status level; certain aspects of environmental stimulation have a differential effect on certain aspects of language, some of which have shifted in recent years. Findings of Templin's study reveal that the upper socioeconomic status group received higher scores quite consistently at each age level for all language measures. Studies indicate that a child shows differences in the pattern of language development both according to his intellectual ability and to the socioeconomic status level of his parents.

TOMLINSON, ETHEL. "Language Arts Skills Needed by Lower Class Children." *Elementary English*. 33: 279–283. May 1956.

Certain skills, usually well developed by the middle-class child before he enters school, are undeveloped in a child of the lower social class and can add to his insecurity and lower his chances of success in school. Such skills include: familiarity with crayons, pencils, and scissors; development of finger muscle skills; proper handling of books and magazines; interest in words; language growth; development of social skills; skill in looking at pictures; and ability to avoid the phenomenon of reversal and transposition of letters and numbers. The school should provide a program to develop these skills before the children start school work.

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